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THE RIVIERA LANDINGS

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AUDIE MURPHY'S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS 54

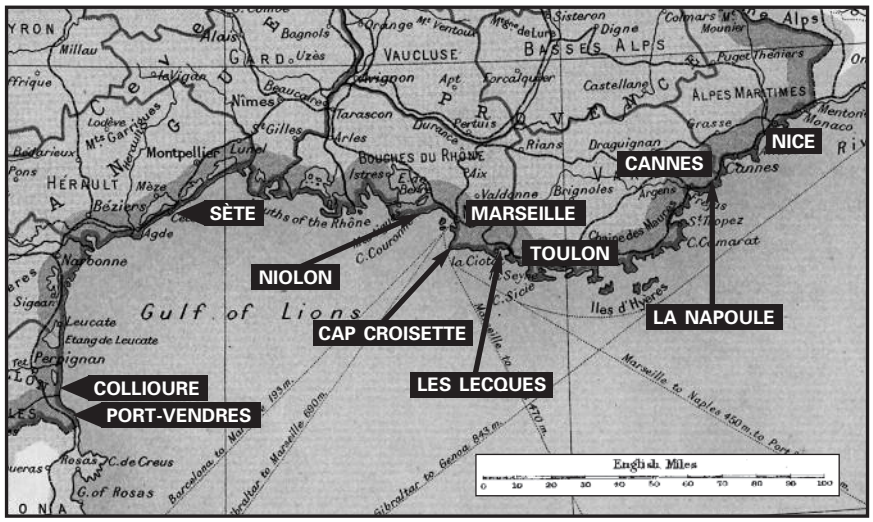
Front cover: One of the strongest German fortifications protecting the Riviera coast against Allied landings, the Mauvanne battery on a hill east of Hyères, comprised four 150mm guns in casemates of the M272 type. Today, the battery's four casemates are in quite a good shape, as is the M262 command post. This is the easternmost casemate. (Jean Paul Pallud)

Centre Pages: This panoramic sketch published by the Survey Directorate of AFHQ on July 31, 1944, showed the absolute weakness of the German defences of the Pampelonne beach: a single line of anti-tank mines and a double row of wire just behind. To cover it, there were only a few machine guns (arrows pointing downwards), two pillboxes and some trenches at the southern end of the beach (rectangles with a dot), and one pillbox at the northern end. Inland, some areas of felled trees. The hill marked '130 feet in elevation' at the extreme left is the Bouis hill, actually 130 metres high, assaulted by Audie Murphy.

Back cover: Up this road (towards the camera), Staff Sergeant Audie Murphy of Company B, 15th Infantry, advanced from Yellow Beach at Ramatuelle on the afternoon of August 15, 1944. Some 200-300 yards further on he carried out the exploit (see inset) which earned him the Distinguished Service Cross (see pages 54-55). The sketch plan was drawn in December 1944 to accompany the recommendation for the DSC. The dotted line shows the ditch, and the house prominent top right is the Bouis farm. (Jean Paul Pallud)

Acknowledgements: The Editor would like to thank Jean Bonnaure, Bruno Quivy, Edgar Pascaud and Michel Courtain for their help at Ramatuelle. We also would like to thank Alain Chazette, historian of the German fortifications in France, and Max Valéry of Marseille.

Planning 'Anvil'. L-R: Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch, commanding US Seventh Army; Air Marshal Sir John C. Slessor, C-in-C of RAF forces in the Mediterranean; Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commanding general North African Theater of Operations, US Army; General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre; and Major General Lowell W. Rooks, deputy C-in-C of North African Theater of Operations. (US Army)



Early in 1943 the C-in-C West, Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt (second from right), came to see the Südwall for himself. At Port-Vendres, 20 kilometres from the Spanish border, he listened as the harbour commander, Fregattenkapitän Denys, detailed the defences.

THE RIVIERA LANDINGS

By Jean Paul Pallud

In January 1943, the Allied Combined Chiefs-of-Staff met with US President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca for the 'Symbol' conference. The British argued that, with limited resources, it was futile to try to enter the battle in northern France at that point in time as there were not more than 21 divisions available to effect a landing on the Continent. Instead, they maintained that the Mediterranean presented the best prospects for success and pleaded the case for first knocking Italy out of the war. The Americans were not over-enthusiastic but, taking into account the fact that there was a large number of troops available in North Africa after the success of Operation 'Torch' (the invasion of North Africa), they preferred to go ahead with a landing in Sicily. The US Chief-of-Staff, General George C. Marshall, 'was most anxious not to become committed to interminable operations in the Mediterranean and wished northern France to be the scene of the main effort against Germany', and he complained that the Allies were by now planning the war on a day-to-day opportunity basis.

The Combined Chiefs-of-Staff met again in Washington in May 1943 for the 'Trident' conference at which the Americans proved willing to discuss possible operations in the Mediterranean in return for a British commitment to fix a target date for the cross-Channel attack. Agreeing that it might be too early to invade southern France, the Americans proposed to seize Sardinia and Corsica. The British expressed their doubts on the value of such an operation and insisted that any action in the theatre should be aimed at eliminating Italy from the war in 1943. The Americans finally approved this concept and Eisenhower, then commanding Allied forces in the Mediterranean, was ordered to draw up plans for invading Italy with Sicily as a stepping stone. Launched on July 10, Operation 'Husky' (see *After the Battle* No. 77) attained an 'unforeseen degree of success'.

On September 8, the Italian government recently formed by Marshal Pietro Badoglio capitulated. This the Germans had anticipated and when the Allied troops landed at Salerno on the morrow (see *After the Battle* No. 95), they found them ready. On October 24, Eisenhower reported on the situation in Italy, making it clear that the Allies were facing a stalemate if not a serious reverse.

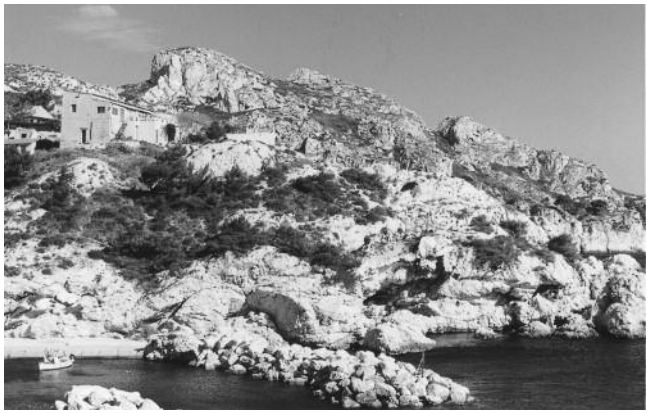
Beginning on November 22, under the code-name 'Sextant', a preliminary conference was held at Cairo between the British and Americans to prepare for a strategic meeting with the Russians. Here, Churchill stressed the British commitment to 'Overlord' — the invasion of France — but proposed to delay the operation for about six weeks so that landing craft scheduled to be transferred in Britain could remain in the Mediterranean long enough to sustain more amphibious assaults. The British proposed

Above left and right: **The field marshal's convoy stopped at a vantage point overlooking the harbour.** *Top:* **At Collioure, five kilometres north of Port-Vendres, a 20mm FlaK 30 gun protected the harbour. (Bundesarchiv and ECPArmées)**

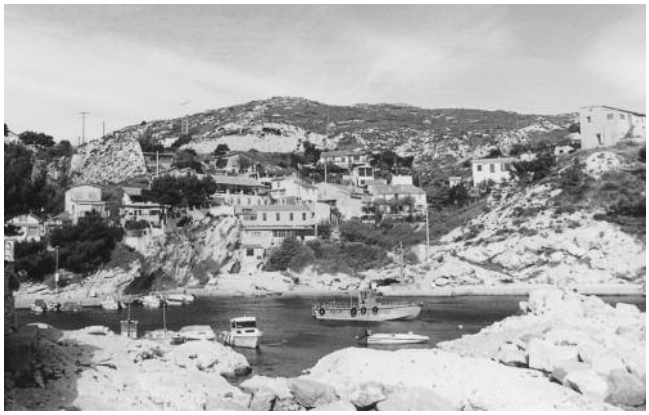
two directions for the conduct of the war in the Mediterranean: to push the offensive in Italy at least as far as the Pisa-Rimini line and to increase support to the Yugoslav partisans, including the establishment of minor beach-heads on the east coast of the Adriatic. If these actions meant a postponement of 'Overlord', they stressed that such delay had to be accepted. These proposals, which represented a return to British peripheral strategy and posed a serious threat to 'Overlord', might have renewed the argument yet the Americans accepted them as a basis for discussion with the Russians.

The first plenary meeting of the 'Eureka' conference with the Russians was held at Teheran on November 28. Stalin immediately made clear the Russian point of view that the most suitable way to defeat Germany was an attack in north-west France, and that the campaign in Italy served no real purpose in this regard. Though he vehemently waved aside all Mediterranean operations, Stalin was much interested in the suggestion made by both Churchill and Roosevelt than an operation was being considered in southern France as a diversion for 'Overlord'. Not seeing this undertaking as a diversion, Stalin was pleased with the pincer aspect of two simultaneous landings on the north-western and southern coasts of France. Abandoned by the Americans, who derived great pleasure to find that the Russian views coincided with their own, the British could find no room for manoeuvre.

Stalin's interest for the operation in southern France caught the Western Allies somewhat unprepared. Most of the planning staffs had remained in Cairo and from the material to hand (an out-of-date outline plan dating back to August), a study for a two-division assault was quickly drafted by the skeleton



All along the Mediterranean coastline, the Germans had taken over French coastal fortifications. Here, at Niolon, a fort facing Marseille across the bay was armed with four 120mm Modèle 1878 guns with a range of 10,7 kilometres. The 1. Batterie of Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 611 soon took it over. *Below:* **After firing practice, the gunners relax for a peaceful evening. The Germans were soon to reinforce Stützpunkt Niolon and add four new casemates, each with a 90mm gun. (ECPArmées)**



Left: **Marseille, Prado beach. Early in 1943, the commander of SS-Polizei-Regiment Todt, Oberst der Schutzpolizei Bernhard Griese, surveyed the defences manned by his men. This second-rate unit was equipped with obsolete weapons like this MG26(t) of Czech origin. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **A new beach has been extended seawards, the old one of 1943 now having been filled in for a car park. In the background, the house that can be seen behind Griese's head is still standing.**

staff present. On the basis of this hasty study — and pressed by Stalin — Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to launch Operation 'Anvil' in southern France concurrently with 'Overlord'.

In Italy, the Allied advance had meanwhile bogged down. On January 22, a landing had been made at Anzio, south of Rome (see *After the Battle* No. 52), but the Germans reacted vigorously and the invading forces soon found themselves confined to their bridgehead, unable to advance inland or even link up with the main body of US Fifth Army to the south. The Anzio venture began to consume resources earmarked for southern France. The British, more opposed to 'Anvil' than ever, pointed out that the battle in Italy was by then serving well the diversionary purpose for which 'Anvil' was intended, and on February 4 Churchill opened a strong attack against 'Anvil'. At the same time, the Americans reaffirmed their interest in 'Anvil' and a frustrated Marshall wrote to Eisenhower — now the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe — on February 7 that 'the British and American Chiefs-of-Staff seemed to have completely reversed themselves and we have become Mediterraneanites and they heavily pro-"Overlord".'

Eisenhower had just started to plan for a three-division 'Anvil', in accordance with the post-'Sextant' directive from the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff. He held that 'Anvil' should go ahead for two reasons: to keep the promise given to the Russians and to make use of the forces available in the Mediterranean, particularly the French. Lack of shipping space prevented them from taking part in northern France so these forces would be wasted if 'Anvil' was not launched. Eisenhower, however, was becoming more and more concerned by the tightness of the landing craft allocation for 'Overlord' and on March 21 he cabled to recommend the cancellation of 'Anvil' as an attack timed to coincide with 'Overlord'. As a result, the US Chiefs-of-Staff reluctantly proposed to postpone 'Anvil' to July 10.

The approach of 'Overlord' froze the debate for a month but when the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff met in London on June 11 — five days after the landing in Normandy — the differences in the British and American position again came sharply into view. As a means to initiate planning, it was nevertheless agreed that a three-division assault should be mounted from the Mediterranean about the end of July. The need to secure more ports to support 'Overlord' soon added a new note of urgency to the debate, and the storm that severely upset the unloading schedule in Normandy made the need for harbours even more urgent. Insisting that 'France is the decisive theatre', Eisenhower argued that 'Anvil' was the most effective method to secure additional harbours, especially to bring in the French forces from North Africa. Furthermore, taking into account that the 'Anvil' forces would have to be supported from the open beaches for at least a month, and that in October the southern coast of France would be swept by the Mistral (a strong northerly wind), September 1 was seen as the latest date for executing the operation. In the circumstances, on June 23 Eisenhower recommended that 'Anvil' go ahead not later than August 30 and preferably a fortnight earlier.

Churchill, who continued to believe that the Allied forces in the Mediterranean would better be used in the prosecution of the Italian campaign, now appealed directly to Roosevelt. On June 25, in a lengthy memorandum which introduced few new elements into the debate, he pleaded strongly for Italy and against 'Anvil'. On June 28, Roosevelt answered that nothing could be graver than a deadlock of the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff and insisted that 'You and I must prevent this and I think we should support the views of the Supreme Allied Commander. He is definitely for "Anvil" and wants action in the field by August 30.' Churchill gave up the fight — at least for the time being — and on July 1, in the course of a telephone conversation with Eisenhower, he indicated that he would approve the operation. On the following day, the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff directed General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, the C-in-C Mediterranean Theatre, to launch a three-division assault against the coast of southern France by August 14, reinforcing the amphibious assault with airborne units and following up with French divisions. The force was to seize the harbours of Toulon and Marseille, then exploit northwards to Lyon and beyond.

By early July, a new code-name, 'Dragoon', was chosen for the operation. (Such changes were frequently made in the fear that the previous code-name had become known to the enemy.) On July 12, in a note to Washington, the British Chiefs-of-Staff again queried the relevance of the operation, pointing out that neither they nor the British Government were convinced that a landing in southern France was the correct strategy. They nevertheless confirmed that they would do their utmost to make it a success. On July 19, Churchill cabled Roosevelt that the break-out in Normandy had opened new perspectives. He proposed to find a place along the coast of Brittany northward from Saint-Nazaire where a second landing could be made. From there, reinforcements from

A squad take up their positions behind the anti-tank wall built by the Germans along this length of the Prado seafront. The man on the left is armed with an old MP28/II, the second with a MG26(t). The same hill can be seen in the background of both wartime pictures. (ECPArmées)

Left: **At Cap Croisette, just south of Marseille, the Germans took over another French battery — Fort Napoléon — equipped with four 138mm dating from 1910. In June 1943, von Rundstedt paid a visit to the 6. Batterie of Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 611 (132 men under Oberleutnant Friedrich Wurzer) which now manned the guns. With him are Konteradmiral Adalbert Zuckschwerdt in the post of Admiral Südküste (admiral, south coast) and General der Infanterie Hans Felber commanding Armeegruppe Felber. (Bundesarchiv)** *Right:* **Cap Croisette lies at the very end of the coast road south of Marseille.**

across the Atlantic could be easily introduced to the Continent. The Americans answered that they could see no gain in abandoning the carefully-planned Operation 'Dragoon' for securing what they saw as an unconvincingly better line of supply for 'Overlord'. On August 7, Roosevelt cabled that the landing in southern France 'should be launched as planned at the earliest practicable date and I have full confidence that it will be successful and of great assistance to Eisenhower in diving the Hun from France'.

In a meeting with the Supreme Commander at 10 Downing Street on August 9, Churchill made a final effort to convince Eisenhower who later recalled this discussion as one of the most difficult he had in the entire war. Churchill intimated that the Americans were behaving as 'a big strong and dominating partner', an argument which Eisenhower evaded by insisting that on military grounds alone, he could not yield. He suggested that if the Prime Minister had political reasons for backing operations in the Balkans, then he should approach the President. Finally, Churchill gave way.

Convinced that the Americans would not budge, on August 10 the British Chiefs-of-Staff instructed General Wilson to proceed with Operation 'Dragoon' and a directive of the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff confirming the instructions was issued the following day, just four days before the landing took place.

Above: **One of the guns is loaded as a demonstration for the high-ranking visitors. In the foreground, one gunner carries the 138mm shell and another the propelling charge.** *Below:* **This view taken from behind the gun shows a concrete casemate on either side: on the left the one containing the propellent charges; on the right that for the shells. (Bundesarchiv)**

PLANNING FOR INVASION

Responsibility for planning and conducting 'Anvil' lay with General Wilson as Allied Supreme Commander, Mediterranean Theatre. Increasingly preoccupied with the situation in Italy, by late 1943 the Joint Planning Staff established by Wilson left the burden of 'Anvil' to the US Seventh Army, then temporarily based in Sicily. In December, the Seventh Army, then under Lieutenant General George S. Patton, was officially assigned to plan, prepare and execute Operation 'Anvil'. However, Patton soon left for England to take up his new posting as commanding general of the Third Army, together with his Chief-of-Staff and a number of key officers that Patton had chosen to take with him. So, Sicily was not the best place to conduct the planning for 'Anvil' and in January General Wilson directed Seventh Army to move a small planning staff to Algiers. Known as Force 163, this staff grew into a combined headquarters with American, British and French contingents.

In March, Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch was appointed the new commander of Seventh Army. He immediately began rebuilding the depleted army staff with officers from IV Corps (which he had previously commanded), and he enlarged the planning groups at Algiers with more officers from the Seventh Army. In early July, having completed the reorganisation, he transferred the planners from North Africa to Naples where the united headquarters completed the planning for 'Anvil'.

In July, the Western Naval Task Force headquarters also moved to Naples. Created to conduct the naval and amphibious phase of the landing, it integrated American, British, French and Greek vessels, and was under the command of Vice Admiral Henry K. Hewitt, the commander of the US Eighth Fleet.

The French units represented a sizeable part of the forces available for 'Anvil' and by mid-April, Général de Gaulle had unilaterally appointed Général Jean de Lattre de Tassigny as the commander of all the French forces involved. General Wilson compromised and agreed that de Lattre's Armée B would take command of the French forces ashore, but under the direction of the US Seventh Army.

At first, it was thought that the Seventh Army would assume a dual role as both an army and army group headquarters with the French army under its command, but, faced with the obvious problems that would inevitably arise from such a situation, it was soon agreed that an army group would ultimately be needed in southern France. This army group, which was to co-ordinate the two army headquarters, one American, one French, would be activated about the time that the 'Anvil' forces passed under the control of SHAEF. Early in July, General Wilson took the first step toward the formation

Above: **Three pieces can be seen in this picture showing No.1 gun firing. Its maximum range was 18,8 kilometres. (Bundesarchiv)** *Below:* **Today, the guns have been removed but the casemates can still be seen, as well as a superb casemate (of type H670) built by the Germans to house a 65mm gun.**

of the group with the creation of the Advanced Detachment, Allied Force Headquarters, under the command of his deputy, Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers. Devers soon made known that this detachment would be easily expanded into an army group headquarters and requested that he should be considered to command the army group. Eisenhower approved the idea and on July 16 Marshall made the appointment of Devers official.

It is interesting to note that Eisenhower and Devers had once been rivals. Both had graduated from West Point but, though Devers had entered service earlier than Eisenhower, the latter was now his superior in rank. Eisenhower's personal dislike for Devers was well known, as was his low opinion of Devers' abilities. When Eisenhower came to England at the beginning of 1944, Devers was commander of the US Army's European Theater of Operations and in charge of the build-up for 'Overlord'. He had been one of Marshall's leading candidates to command an army group within 'Overlord' but Eisenhower soon successfully recommended Bradley for the post. Also, while he requested officers who had served under him in North Africa (such as Patton) for combat commands in 'Overlord', Eisenhower persuaded Marshall to send Devers to the Mediterranean as deputy to Wilson. Though he realised that Eisenhower was trying to exclude his potential rivals, Marshall finally approved the transfer, accepting that it was only natural that Eisenhower would prefer to work with those commanders with whom he was familiar.

At Les Lecques, five kilometres east of La Ciotat, a MG34 machine gun covered the coast. The turret from a PzKpfw II retired from service has been mounted on top of the casemate. (Bundesarchiv)

The long strategic debate over 'Anvil' had been a major problem to the planning staffs who tried to follow the political tide, drawing up a variety of invasion plans as the fortune

Six kilometres west of Cannes lies La Napoule where the Germans had established themselves in the château, a 14th-century castle nicely restored at the beginning of the 20th century by the American sculptor Henry Clews. *Above left:* **Men of Ost-Bataillon 661 train their 37mm PaK 35/36 across the colonnade that faces the beach beside the château. In April 1944, this unit, made up of Russian troops, was to become the IV. Bataillon of Reserve-Grenadier-Regiment 239.** *Below left:* **Changing the guard. (Bundesarchiv)** *Below right:* **Today, La Napoule château and its art collections is open to visitors.**

of the operation waxed and waned. The earliest plans called for a two-division assault until Eisenhower called for a three-division operation in December 1943. In February 1944, Wilson assumed that the main operation would be of two divisions, with a third following, and this plan was to govern the planning until July when the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff returned to the idea of the three-division attack.

At first, it had appeared that the best beaches for amphibious assaults lay near Sète, far to the west of Marseille, and along the coasts west and east of Toulon. The Sète area was soon ruled out, for this provided only limited port facilities, as were the beaches west of Toulon for they proved to be at the extreme range of the US XII Tactical Air Command bases in Corsica. The planners finally settled on the shoreline extending from Cap Cavalaire, about 40 kilometres east of Toulon, to Anthéor, 15 kilometres west of Cannes. This sector included minor ports such as Saint-Raphaël, Sainte-Maxime and Saint-Tropez, that might supplement the over-the-beach supply operations. Just to the west was Toulon, the first port objective that the planners hoped would fall by D + 20. Further west was Marseille, the capture of which was to take place by D + 40 to 50. The swift securing of the high ground that dominated the assault sector was vitally important and the planners had drawn the beach-head along the 'Blue Line' — an arc with a radius of roughly 35 kilometres from its centre at Cap de Saint-Tropez — which was to be reached as quickly as possible.

From early on, the planners had wanted an airborne assault to support the amphibious operation. By May, it had been decided that a full airborne division was to be used but the forces available by then amounted to no more than an Anglo-American regimental task force. Reinforcements were brought in from the States in May and June and by mid-July the airborne force assembled in the Rome area was about a full division strong. Its major elements were the British 2nd Parachute Brigade, the US 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, three more American parachute and glider battalions and several battalions of parachute artillery. Seventh Army called it the 1st Airborne Task Force and selected American Major General Robert T. Frederick to take command.

The planners settled on nine separate landing beaches and laid down that the three-division assault was to be preceded by airborne forces jumping inland and by special forces operating on both flanks. Since the French units had no experience in amphibious warfare, they agreed that the initial assault should be made by American units.

From west to east, 'Kodak Force' — the main assault force under the VI Corps of Major General Lucian K. Truscott — was deployed as follows:

On the left, the US 3rd Infantry Division was to land on the Alpha beaches on both sides of the Saint-Tropez peninsula while in the centre, the US 45th Infantry Division was to land on the Delta beaches just east of Sainte-Maxime. On the right flank, the US 36th Infantry Division was to assault two Camel beaches on either side of Saint-

Top: **Tourists in uniform on the Promenade des Anglais, Nice in the autumn of 1943. L-R front row: Generalmajor Walter Botsch, Chief-of-Staff of 19. Armee; General der Infanterie Baptist Kniess commanding Gruppe Kniess; Generalleutnant Otto Kohlermann commanding the Panzergrenadier-Division Feldherrnhalle and Generalleutnant Kurt Hoffmann commanding the 715. Infanterie-Division.** *Above left:* **The same group of Germans inspects the defences from the Ponchettes promontory. (ECPArmées)** *Above right:* **From the present-day Place du 8 Mai 1945, tourists gaze across the Baie des Anges.**

Left: **The commander of Armeegruppe G, Generaloberst Johannes Blaskowitz, after a conference at the 1. Armee HQ in Bordeaux. The 1. Armee, with the LXXX. and LXXXVI. Armeekorps, had the task of defending the Atlantic coast from the Loire to the Spanish border. In August 1944, the army headquarters was sent to the Normandy front and the LXIV. Armeekorps took its place. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **The former HQ on Place de la Comédie is now an estate agent's office.**

Raphaël and the tiny Camel Blue beach at the head of the Anthéor cove, the easternmost beach. Each division was to be supported by eight amphibious DD Sherman tanks in the leading waves. Initially to serve as the VI Corps reserve and exploitation force, a combat command of the French 1ère Division Blindée, CC1 (this division used numerals to designate its combat commands), was to land on D-Day over the 36th Division beaches. (It should be noted that previous plans had been altered at the insistence of Truscott so that the most-experienced division, the 3rd Infantry Division, was now scheduled to land on the left, ready for an early drive on Toulon.)

'Garbo Force', the first French follow-up force, was scheduled to start landing over the 3rd Division beaches on D + 1. These elements included the 1ère Division de Marche d'Infanterie (1ère DMI, ex-1ère Division des Forces Françaises Libres), the 3ème Division d'Infanterie Algérienne (DIA), and the 1ère Division Blindée (less CC1 already ashore and another combat command to come later). The 9ème Division d'Infanterie Coloniale (DIC), with two infantry regiments attached, was to arrive by D + 9 and the rest of the IIème Corps d'Armée, including the last elements of the 1ère Division Blindée, were not to land until D + 25.

On the left wing, 'Sitka Force' — over 2,000 Americans and Canadians of the 1st Special Service Force of Colonel Edwin A. Walker — was to land during the night before D-Day on two islands, Port-Cros and Levant, which lay just south of Cap Cavalaire. Shortly afterwards, about 800 French Commandos of 'Romeo Force' were to come ashore at Cap Nègre, just west of Alpha Red, to destroy defences in the area and establish road-blocks along the coastal road to stop all German attempts to attack the beach-head from the left flank. 'Rosie Force', another group of less than 100 French commandos, was to land at the opposite end of the beach-head, at Le Trayas, and block the coastal road on the right flank.

Paratroops of the 1st Airborne Task Force were to jump in the vicinity of Le Muy, on the edge of the 'Blue Line', well before light on D-Day. Their mission was to clear the area for subsequent glider landings and to prevent the Germans from moving down into the beach-head through the Argens corridor.

THE FFI

Following the success of the landing in Normandy, the resistance forces in southern France had grown stronger and bolder in June and July. With Armeegruppe G concentrating its forces along the coast and sending unit after unit to the Normandy front, the FFI (Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur) had now taken control over large sectors of the interior. About 2,000 FFI soldiers had assembled on the Vercors, a rugged uplands south-west of Grenoble and established the République there on July 3 in the name of de Gaulle's Comité de Libération Nationale (see *After the Battle* No. 105). Though they were poorly armed and equipped, the threat was alarming enough for the Germans to move in force against the Vercors in late July. On the 21st, 20 gliders brought in some 250 German paratroopers at Vassieu, right in the middle of the FFI mountain stronghold. Meanwhile, elements of the 157. Reserve-Division attacked the Vercors from the north and east and soon forced the lightly held passes. For hours, fighting raged around Vassieu but the resistance fighters could not retake the village. The fate of the battle was sealed on the 23rd when another flight of 20 gliders brought reinforcements to the paratroopers. A desperate call for help to Algiers fell on deaf ears and, as a result, the Germans gained control of the Vercors. Over 600 resistance fighters had been killed as well as around 200 civilians.

This major operation secured the Rhône valley for a while but it soon became clear that German forces were quite unable to subdue the resistance groups. Sabotage increased, bridges were blown and telephone lines cut, at a pace far beyond the capacity of Armeegruppe G to stop it or even repair the damage done. The Germans had to detach more and more forces to guard bridges and supply dumps and to keep open the main lines of communication, particularly northwards along the Rhône valley. Still, they had to resort to well-protected convoys to move safely. Communications between Armeegruppe G with its forces on the Atlantic coast and with Ob. West were frequently cut and radio links were only a poor substitute as the mountains caused interference. At the beginning of August, Generaloberst Johannes Blaskowitz, commanding the army group, reported that the FFI had now developed into an organised army in his rear. Basically, the Germans had by then lost control of southern France save for narrow strips along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, the gap linking the two sectors through Carcassone and Toulouse, and the Rhône valley.

GERMAN DEFENCES

In early 1944, the German High Command had come to a reasonably accurate conclusion about Allied intentions in France, anticipating a major invasion somewhere on the Channel coast in the coming months. In January, they interpreted the Anzio operation as the first of a series of secondary attacks designed to tie down their forces before the main assault in northern France. Intelligence having revealed that the Allies had retained large uncommitted forces in North Africa, they also came to the conclusion that another major attack would be launched in the Mediterranean. In February, they had deduced that the assault would probably come in southern France, possibly before the main cross-Channel operation.

At the beginning of June 1944, the German forces in southern France were under the command of Blaskowitz's Armeegruppe G. In the west, the 1. Armee, with the LXXX. Armeekorps and LXXXVI. Armeekorps, each with two divisions, defended the Atlantic coast from the Loire south to the Spanish border. In the south, the 19. Armee guarded the Mediterranean coastline with three corps: the LXII. Reservekorps on the left with two divisions; Gruppe Kniess (soon to be redesignated LXXXV. Armeekorps) in the centre with two divisions; and the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps on the right flank with three divisions. In addition, Armeegruppe G controlled the LXVI. Reservekorps which was holding, with part of one division and various other units, the area between the Pyrénées border and the Massif Central. Armeegruppe G also had the LVIII. Panzerkorps as a reserve force with three panzer divisions, one assembled near Bordeaux, another near Toulouse and a third near Avignon.

Though Armeegruppe G might appear reasonably strong on a map, grave shortages in men and equipment plagued all its forces. Most infantry divisions were under strength and lacking equipment and even their staffs, at division level and below, were all undermanned. Also the drain on manpower had left most of the units with a high proportion

of ethnic Germans from the Sudetenland, Poland and the Baltic States while many of the native Germans who remained were over age or physically unfit. The low quality of these divisions was brought to light by the designation 'reserve' that many of them carried. Even the three panzer divisions of LVIII. Panzerkorps were shadows of their former strength, being in various stages of refit and training.

In addition, several of the corps headquarters under Armeegruppe G were former training commands classified as 'reserve' corps. This designation was dropped in July or August although these headquarters never obtained the staff sections and corps troops necessary for effective combat operations. Armeegruppe G itself, which had become operational as such only in May, lacked many essential staff and Blaskowitz was unable to expand his headquarters: as its name Armeegruppe implies, the army group had an inferior status to that of a Heeresgruppe.

After the beginning of 'Overlord', the strength of Armeegruppe G gradually weakened as its best units were sent to the Normandy front. The 17. SS-Panzergrenadier-Division went first on June 7, followed by the LXXXVI. Armeekorps headquarters, the 2. SS-Panzer-Division, followed by four infantry divisions, then four artillery battalions. These transfers were halted for a time but resumed in late July with the departure of LVIII. Panzerkorps headquarters, the 9. Panzer-Division, and yet another infantry division. They continued in August when the headquarters of the 1. Armee, the LXVI. Armeekorps and LXXX. Armeekorps left, followed by a regiment of the 338. Infanterie-Division, two more artillery battalions, and most of the anti-aircraft units defending the Rhône bridges. In the meantime, only the LXIV. Armeekorps came to replace the 1. Armee on the Atlantic coast, establishing its headquarters at Poitiers. Also, odd reinforcements were sent to southern France but these were mainly worn-out elements: two battered divisions from Normandy, one having to be merged with one of the reserve divisions guarding the Atlantic coast, and another division which had been decimated on the Eastern Front.

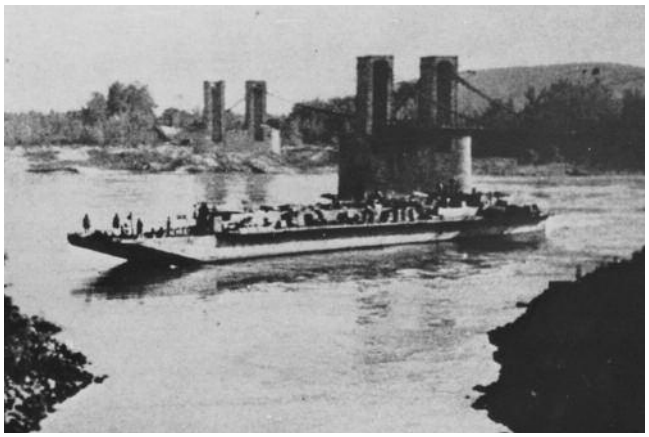
By mid-August, on the eve of Operation 'Dragoon', Armeegruppe G had lost one-quarter of its infantry divisions and two-thirds of its armour. Blaskowitz could expect no assistance from Heeresgruppe B, which was by then itself in a desperate situation; neither could he count on Ob. Südwest in Italy as it had never been envisaged to send forces across the Alps to counter-attack an Allied invasion in southern France.

The Germans were somewhat surprised when 'Overlord' was launched without a concurrent invasion of southern France but, nevertheless, they still had kept a wary eye on the Mediterranean coast. Guesses for the Allied amphibious assault fluctuated between the Italian Ligurian coast and the French Riviera but by early August most German planners were convinced that it would come in southern France. Considering that the most likely place was east of the Rhône, Blaskowitz decided to move the last armoured division to remain under his control — the 11. Panzer-Division — from the Toulouse area to the Rhône valley. By August 13, General der Infanterie Friedrich Wiese, the commander of 19. Armee, had himself concluded that the Allied landing would come east of Toulon and to meet the threat, he decided to move the 189. Reserve-Division and 198. Infanterie-Division, then west of the Rhône, across the river. These two weak divisions were to take responsibility for the static defence of Toulon and Marseille, thereby freeing the better 242. and 244. Infanterie-Divisions to be used as mobile reserves. However, with the complete destruction of the Rhône bridges by Allied air attacks, the lack of transportation, and FFI ambushes, these transfers were much delayed. By the night of August 14/15, when the ships of the Western Task Force were in sight of the Riviera, the move of these divisions across the Rhône had hardly begun.

By August 15, the sector of the shoreline about to be assaulted was held as follows. From the Toulon area to Anthéor, a few kilometres north of the Argens river, the coast was defended by the 242. Infanterie-Division of Generalleutnant Johannes Baessler. The division's left wing, the area that included the future 'Dragoon' assault beaches, was held by Grenadier-Regiment 765, the weakest of the division's three regiments. It had been formed only a few months previously and its fourth battalion was made up of Osttruppen — East European troops. Further east, the 148. Reserve-Division was responsible for the coast between Anthéor and the Italian border and one battalion (another Osttruppen unit) of its Reserve-Grenadier-Regiment 239 was positioned just to the north of the 765th.

In accordance with his fortress policy which aimed at denying entry to the Continent to the Allies, Hitler had ordered the strong garrisons at Toulon and Marseille to fight to the end. However, most of the defences of the two ports were facing seaward and there was now no time to fortify their land approaches.

By early August, the Germans were convinced that another invasion, concurrent to 'Overlord', would come in southern France so Blaskowitz decided to move the 11. Panzer-Division to the Rhône valley. This picture was taken in Toulouse on August 13 as elements of Panzer-Regiment 15 were preparing to depart. (11. Panzer-Division)



It was August 19 when the 11. Panzer-Division started to cross the Rhône. The bridges had been destroyed by air attacks so the men and equipment had to be ferried across the river. (11. Panzer-Division)

We found that this uncaptioned picture was taken at Roquemaure, 12 kilometres north of Avignon. This particular bridge was hit by Allied aircraft on August 19. The suspension bridge which replaced it was built some distance upstream.

The first phase of the air campaign directly associated with 'Dragoon' started on August 5, the attacks being directed at U-Boat bases, airfields and German communications in general between Sète and Genoa. From the 10th, the air campaign concentrated on coastal defences, radar stations and communications. *Above:* **At Anthéor, ten kilometres east of Saint-Raphaël, the large viaduct on the coastal railway leading to Italy was destroyed. Earlier, RAF Bomber Command had launched three attacks against it with the Lancasters of No. 617 'Dambusters' Squadron: on the night of September 16/17, 1943 (12 Lancasters); the night of November 11/12 (10 Lancasters, each dropping one 12,000lb 'Tallboy' bomb), and the night of February 12/13, 1944 (10 Lancasters). None of the raids was successful and no direct hits were scored.** *Below:* **On this aerial view, the shadow cast by the ruined viaduct in the early morning sun makes for a nice comparison with the picture** *above* **taken from near the ruins visible in the bottom right-hand corner. The small curved beach visible at the bottom of the viaduct was soon to become Camel Blue, the easternmost assault beach of 'Dragoon'. (ECPArmées)**

THE 'DRAGOON' BEACH-HEAD

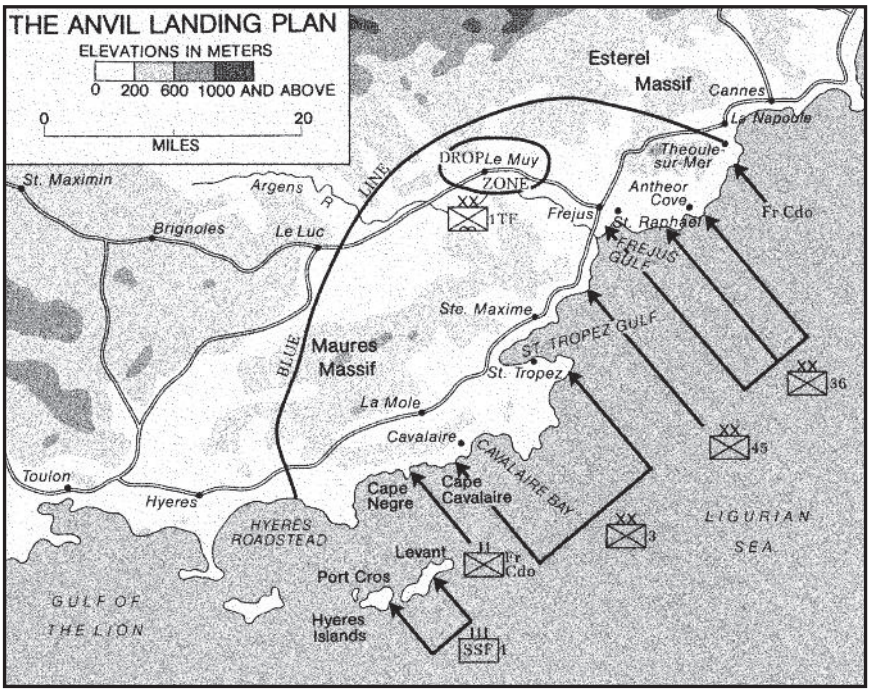
As part of the Mediterranean Allied Air Force (MAAF) operations over southern France, air attacks indirectly related to 'Dragoon' had been underway for many months. In July, the air command was able to devote little effort to the preparation for 'Dragoon', primarily because of the demands of ground operations in Italy, but from the beginning of August a widespread air interdiction campaign was launched in southern France. To avoid the risk of identifying the assault area to the Germans, at first the attacks extended from the Sète area all the way around to the Italian coast south-east of Genoa. From August 10, the air campaign centered on the coastal defences, radar stations and communications, during which phase over 6,400 tons were dropped so that by the eve of 'Dragoon' almost all important road and rail bridges over the Rhône and Durance rivers had been destroyed.

Meanwhile, the final loading for the seaborne elements had begun on August 8. Most of the VI Corps units embarked from Naples and Salerno, while the French 3ème DIA loaded at Tarento. The 9ème DIC boarded at Corsica but many other French units, including CC1, came directly from North Africa. The D-Day convoys comprised over 880 ships and craft and carried over 150,000 troops excluding naval crews and 21,000 vehicles. All convoys sailed as planned and the rendezvous were effected as scheduled.

Left: **By the eve of 'Dragoon', almost all important road and rail bridges over the Rhône and Durance rivers had been destroyed. This was the suspension bridge over the Durance at Cavaillon, 20 kilometres south-east of Avignon. (US Army)** *Right:* **On the D99, an ordinary concrete bridge has replaced the picturesque one destroyed in 1944.**

On August 8 the final loading of the assault troops began. *Left:* **Elements of the 45th Infantry Division embark in tank landing ships at Bagnoli in Italy.** *Right:* **At Naples, two infantry landing ships wait for troops to board. (We will see *LSI(L) 554* again on page 25). The 'Dragoon' D-Day convoys comprised over 880 ships and landing craft. (US Army/ECPArmées)**

From the 141st Infantry Regiment history: 'It was still dark as we climbed down the rope nets into the LCVPs. By the time we were loaded it was getting lighter but it was still quiet except for the sound of the boats scraping the iron grey sides of the ships as the assault boats rose and fell on the gently running sea. By 0630 hours we were circling; at first just the nine boats from one ship, then the circle grew larger and larger as more and more LCVPs were filled with soldiers. By now it was broad daylight and the coastline was visible in detail as the great invasion force swung into action. Wave after wave of bombers came in low and began to saturate the beach with their loads. At 0650 hours, the naval preparation started . . . Now our boats straightened out into a line of 'V's made up of five boats each. Suddenly the engines took on a new deep-throated roar and the square prows rose higher out of the water as we headed into the beach passing the slower LCMs, rocket-launching craft, amphibious 6x6s carrying 105mm artillery howitzers, patrol craft and finally the tiny minesweepers. At 4,000 yards we passed the last control boat and heard a young Navy officer on the bridge yell something through a loud-speaker. . . Now we were 2,000 yards off-shore and the great rocket ships began to send their screeching cargo into the air. The sea was rolling lightly and the increased speed threw a fine salt spray into our faces.'



Operation 'Dragoon' was a three-division assault preceded by airborne forces jumping inland and special forces operating on both flanks. (Map from *Riviera to the Rhine,* the US Army Official History by Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith.)

Left: **At Cap Nègre, on the far left flank of the assault area, French commandos landed shortly after midnight on a rocky, cliff-faced coast. Though scattered because of a low haze which caused their LCA landing craft to drift westwards, they took the Germans by surprise and quickly overran artillery emplacements and pillboxes. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **We found that these pictures were taken on the south-eastern side of the promontory. In the background, Pointe de la Chappe.**

RANGERS AND COMMANDOS

From 0.30 a.m. on August 15, the 1st Special Service Force landed as scheduled on the Levant and Port-Cros islands. The small German garrisons offered little resistance and the whole eastern part of Port-Cros had been secured by 6.30 a.m. All fighting was over on Levant by the evening but on Port-Cros, the Germans withdrew into old thick-walled forts. The heavy cruiser USS *Augusta* lent a hand but her 8-inch shells simply bounced off the walls and bombs and rockets launched by MAAF aircraft proved equally ineffective. Finally, on the morning of the 17th, HMS *Ramillies* lobbed a dozen rounds from her 15-inch guns at the fort which convinced the garrison that further resistance was useless.

On the mainland, the French Commando d'Afrique went in at Cap Nègre on time at 0.30 a.m. but the landing craft bringing them in had drifted westwards and the force went ashore some two kilometres west of its objectives. Nevertheless, they quickly overran a handful of pillboxes and some artillery positions and by daylight had cut the coastal road as planned.

On the right flank of the assault area, another group of French commandos, the Groupe Naval d'Assaut, encountered considerably more difficulty. Brought in from Corsica aboard PT boats, the 67 men reached the shore near Le Trayas in rubber boats at 1.45 a.m. They started inland for their objectives but soon ran into a newly-laid minefield which caused many casualties and roused the Germans. By daylight, a few of the Commandos had escaped but those still trapped in the minefield were compelled to surrender. With ten killed, 17 wounded and 22 prisoners, the operation was a costly failure yet at least it had succeeded in diverting German attention away from the Camel beaches.

By the end of 1944, the war had still to be won and the new expanding French Army was in need of publicity (see *After the Battle* No. 105). Consequently, it was decided to re-enact the successful operation by the Commando d'Afrique at Cap Nègre. The commandos had operated in the early hours of August 15 so no genuine pictures had been taken at the time, but, when the battle was restaged in January 1945, it was photographed in detail. (ECPArmées)

On the morning of August 15, Sergeant Irwing Leibowitz took this picture of 'men and equipment being dropped near La Motte from C-47 transport aircraft belonging to the 1st Airborne Task Force'. This was a later serial of the main force after the ground fog, which blanketed the area when the first serial came in at 4.30 a.m., had lifted. (US Army)

THE 1st AIRBORNE TASK FORCE

Reaching the airborne target sector near Le Muy, the troop carriers bringing the parachute pathfinder teams found the area completely blanketed by ground fog. From 3.30 a.m., the teams were dropped using navigational estimates and in consequence, most landed off their assigned drop zones. When the first serial of the main force came in at 4.30 a.m., they found no signals from the pathfinders and poor visibility over the drop zone. Nevertheless the paratroopers jumped and, although half of the US 509th Parachute Battalion landed in or close to its assigned drop zone, the three battalions of the 517th Parachute Regiment were scattered far and wide. With two pathfinder teams signalling from their correct zone, things went reasonably well for the British 2nd Parachute Brigade which followed at 4.50 a.m. and two-thirds were dropped as planned, the remainder being scattered north-east and north-west of Le Muy. The paratroops struggled to orient themselves and regroup and by dawn some 60 per cent had assembled in the Le Muy area. Most of the others were scattered so far and wide that they did not join their parent units until D + 1 and the last men were not collected until D + 5.

Fog still obscured the landing area when the gliders bringing in the follow-up forces of the 2nd Parachute Brigade arrived at 8.15 a.m., consequently the pilots of the tugs

On the edge of La Motte, British airborne troops watch the gliders coming in. The C-47 tug planes are about to release the glider tow lines. As the road sign gave us a precise location, we easily discovered this spot on the eastern outskirts of La Motte although new houses and trees now make a comparison dull and meaningless. (US Army)

Above: **According to the original caption 'Leslie L. Rich, Company C, 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, and fellow troopers move along a dusty country road toward their objective'. We found that the 'dusty country road' was the D47 between La Motte and the crossroads with the D25 north of Le Muy and Michaël, Johan and Céline, the author's children, agreed to play the fool for the sake of history.** *Below:* **With the best fields jam-packed with the first gliders to arrive, later pilots had to put their gliders down on rougher areas. Consequently, damage to the gliders was considerable but cargo and passengers were generally unhurt and by the evening of August 15, 90 per cent of the glider-borne troops and equipment were ready for action. All in all, nearly 9,000 airborne troops landed in southern France on D-Day. (US Army)**

Left: **German resistance in the sector was light and the paratroopers experienced only minor skirmishes as they moved off to their objectives and assembly areas. At La Motte, this squad deploys to cover the road to the village. In the centre, note the man with a beret: is he a member of the FFI or a British para? All the pictures of the 1st Airborne Task Force on August 15 were taken by Signal Corps Sergeant Irwing Leibowitz. (US Army)** *Right:* **Such are the places where history was made.**

turned back without releasing their tows and returned to airfields in the Rome area. The following serials were delayed about an hour and they came in to land successfully later in the morning. The gliders of the flight which had turned back in the morning returned in the evening and landed from 6 p.m. Confusion and some losses stemmed from the fact that the first gliders had landed on the clearest areas instead of their assigned zone so that when the later waves came in, they found their LZs packed with gliders and the pilots had to divert to rougher areas. After the operation, only 50 of the 400 gliders could be salvaged.

Except in Le Muy, resistance was light and the airborne forces came up against opposition only as they assembled and moved towards their objectives. German forces began to turn on the paratroopers later in the day but by evening the 1st Airborne Task Force had accomplished all its D-Day missions, save for the capture of Le Muy itself. Formal contact with the seaborne forces was made at about 8.30 p.m. when a patrol of the 45th Division met elements of the 509th Parachute Battalion south of Le Muy.

Near Draguignan, paratroopers dropped wide had cut all wire communications in sight, practically isolating the LXII. Armeekorps headquarters that was in the town. From then on, the corps commander, General Ferdinand Neuling, was out of contact with both the 19. Armee and his two divisions, his isolation being one of the major reasons for the German lack of reaction on the morning of D-Day.

Men of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion taking a short break with some British paras. Because of poor visibility over the drop zone, the parachute units of the 1st Airborne Task Force were much scattered on landing, the 509th Parachute Infantry being particularly dispersed, only half of its men landing in or close to its assigned zone. Note the Union Jack armbands worn by the British soldiers — a means of identification rarely used by British airborne troops in other operations. (US Army)

Left: **On August 16 at La Motte, American paratroopers march German prisoners into captivity. Note how the three Germans in the lead march smartly in step. Shortly before noon on the 17th, major elements from the 36th Division began to arrive from the Fréjus area, thus ending the mission of the airborne force. (US Army)** *Right:* **This is the road to Le Muy.**

THE MAIN LANDINGS

From 5.50 a.m. to about 7.30 a.m., the air force launched concentrated attacks in the assault area, 385 bombers and 900 fighter-bombers attacking coastal guns, beach defences and underwater obstacles. The naval bombardment opened up at 6.50 a.m. At first, low overcast combined with smoke raised by the air bombardment generally forced the ships to resort to unobserved fire but the visual conditions improved after 7.30 a.m. and the bombarding ships moved closer inshore to concentrate their fire on the landing beaches. At 7.50 a.m., as the leading assault waves were approaching the shore, the naval fire shifted to the flanks. However, although the combined air and naval bombardment had knocked out some of the beach defences and cut paths across the obstacles on the beaches and in the water, it had generally failed to make an impression against the coastal artillery emplacements.

ALPHA

On the left wing of the 'Dragoon' beachhead, three beaches had been allocated to the 3rd Infantry Division: Alpha Red and Green at the bottom of the Cavalaire bay and Alpha Yellow at the head of the Saint-Tropez peninsula.

Shortly after 7 a.m., while ships were hammering the coast, radio-controlled LCVP landing craft loaded with high explosives, called Apex craft, were guided ashore on Alpha Red. Some crashed into the obstacles, opening channels as they exploded, others blew up on hitting the beach, detonating mines. Just before 8 a.m. 20 rocket-launching craft blasted the shoreline as the first troop-loaded LCVPs started their run-in, preceded by the DD tanks. The leading regiments hit the beach at 9.20 a.m. — the 15th Infantry on Alpha Yellow and the 7th Infantry on Alpha Red. Two LCVPs hit mines and sank, resulting in 60 casualties and, though the following waves landed as scheduled, mines, both offshore and on the beach, were a real nuisance, damaging more craft.

Ashore, opposition was weak and many of the Osttruppen began surrendering as soon as the attackers advanced beyond the beaches. On the left wing, having cleared strong opposition at Cavalaire by 10.30 a.m., the 7th Infantry made contact with the French commandos at Cap Nègre and began probing westwards. Other elements of the 7th Infantry pushed inland, taking Cogolin in the afternoon. On the right wing, the 15th Infantry reached Saint-Tropez in the afternoon, only to find that most of the town had already been cleared by FFI soldiers and mis-dropped paratroopers of the 509th Parachute Battalion. Having followed the 7th Infantry ashore on Alpha Red, the leading elements of the 30th Infantry pushed further inland and reached Collobrières in the evening, a whole day ahead of schedule.

Alpha Red, just east of Cavalaire. *Top:* **Sherman DD tanks have just 'churned up out of the water, instantly dropped the hood like snakes leaving their skins, and rumbled off down the beach with their 75s, blasting still belligerent minded German machine-gunners out of existence' . . . or so reads the 141st Infantry regimental history.** *Above:* **Side by side, dozens of LCIs line up on Alpha Red as 3rd Division soldiers race up the beach. Both pictures were taken on August 15. (US Army)**

Alpha Yellow. *Top:* **Men of the 15th Infantry take cover behind a small rampart of sand shovelled up along the beach.** *Right:* **Today, the Pampelonne beach is one of the most famous on the whole Riviera. If you plan to check this comparison at the southern end of the beach, be ready to undress totally for nudism there is the rule! In the background Cap Camarat with its lighthouse.** *Below:* **Troops from the 15th Infantry use the sand for cover as they await orders to advance. On the shoulder of the sergeant looking at the photographer is the divisional patch of the 3rd Division: three white stripes on a blue square. Another sergeant of the 15th Infantry — Staff Sergeant Audie L. Murphy — also landed here: he was to receive the Distinguished Service Cross for his role in overrunning a strong point in the hills overlooking the beach (see pages 54 and 55). (US Army)**

Above: **Men of the 45th Division march away from *LCI(L) 513* which has just put them ashore and move out westwards in the direction of Sainte-Maxime. In the foreground, *LCT 1143* is unloading wheeled transport. (US Army)** *Below:* **Delta Red today.**

DELTA

In the centre of the beach-head, the 45th Infantry Division's beaches lay just east of Sainte-Maxime. Delta Red was the nearest to the town, then came Delta Green, Yellow and Blue a few kilometres further up the coast. This sector was defended by the I. Bataillon of Grenadier-Regiment 765 supported by a field artillery battalion and one naval battery.

There were no offshore obstacles on the Delta beaches and as the air and naval bombardment had silenced most of the defences, the 45th Division's two regiments landed without difficulty. Only a few rounds of mortar and some small-arms fire harassed the leading waves and the dispirited defenders readily surrendered as the invaders marched inland. Having landed on Delta Red and Green, the 157th Infantry advanced west toward Sainte-Maxime, brushing aside the weak opposition encountered on the way. They met stronger opposition in the town itself but naval gun-fire was called in support and by 3.30 p.m. Sainte-Maxime was secured. At dusk, contact was made with elements of the 3rd Division.

On Delta Yellow and Blue, the 180th Infantry also met negligible resistance, though four DD tanks were lost to mines on Delta Blue. The 1st Battalion ran into stronger resistance as they advanced northwards along the N98 coast road and in the evening the leading elements were halted in front of strong points at the southern edge of Saint-Aygulf, only half-way to Saint-Raphaël. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had driven inland following a poor road over rough hilly terrain. They soon ran into strong resistance and by nightfall were still battling for the high ground about three kilometres inland. That afternoon, a recce patrol had pressed northwards from Sainte-Maxime along the D25 and had joined with the paratroopers near Le Muy by 8.30 p.m.

Commitment of the division's third regiment, the 179th Infantry, proved unnecessary and it assembled without incident near Sainte-Maxime.

According to the original caption, *LST 996* was the first tank landing ship to reach Delta beach. (US Army)

Delta Red. Leaving *LCI(L) 552,* heavily loaded troops of the 45th Division wade in chest-deep water toward the beach at La Nartelle. All are wearing the US flag on their left arm. On the left is another infantry landing craft, *LCI(L) 522*. Landing Craft Infantry (Large) were capable of carrying up to 200 soldiers in covered accommodation for periods not exceeding 24 hours and had a speed of 15 knots. Designed in Britain, the LCI(L) was mass-produced in the United States and was able to cross the Atlantic under its own steam. However, it was too vulnerable for use by the first wave of an assault landing so the LCA (Landing Craft Assault), LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel, the American equivalent of the LCA), and LCT (Landing Craft Tank) were the main assault craft. The LCT *(opposite page top)* **was designed with a hinged ramp door in the bow to land tanks and vehicles straight onto defended beaches. The larger type could carry five tanks or a mixed load of ten to twelve vehicles. The LST** *(opposite page bottom)* **was a larger ship designed to accommodate 50 vehicles in a capacious hold with more on the upper deck, as well as 150 soldiers. It was provided with a ramp door in the bow and, where the beach was fairly steep, it could ground and land its load without assistance. However, like the LCI(L), it was too vulnerable for use on a defended beach and was usually employed to land vehicles in the later phases of an operation. (US Army)**

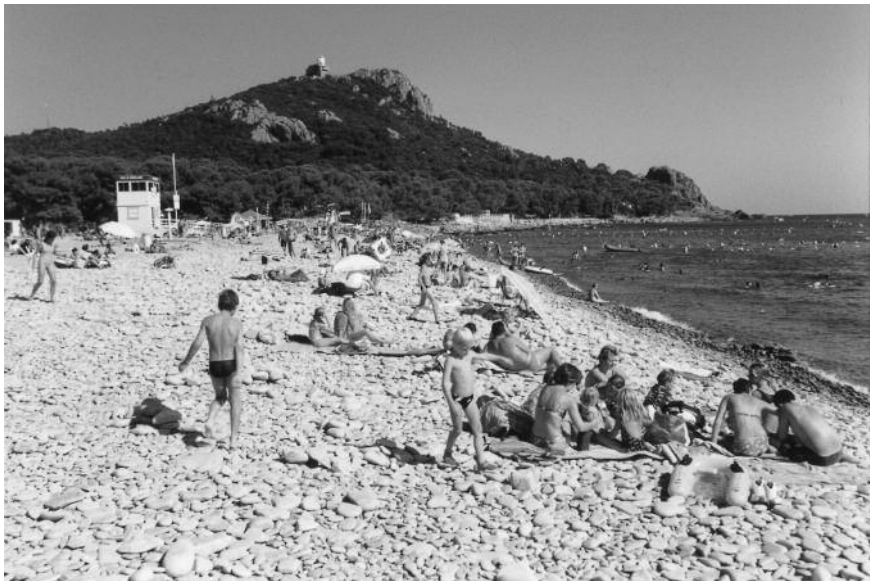
Left: **A few hundred metres from Delta Red, at Cap des Sardinaux, soldiers of the 157th Infantry move westward. From here, Sainte-Maxime is two kilometres away. The 45th Division history *The Combat Report of an Infantry Division* describes the first hours ashore: '9.30. Orders from naval commander for all ships to close into the shore. We headed for Red Beach on Cap des Sardinaux. As we approached the shoreline we could see smoke from brush fires, blackened places, sites of bomb bursts, and some buildings slightly damaged. Then, as the details of the scene came into view, we could see the breaches in the seawall where the demolition crews had made openings for the assault platoons. In the water off Green Beach, we could see a tank with only the turret showing. One damaged landing craft was the only injured ship we could see. Initial objectives were quickly taken. Beyond the beaches the enemy's resistance was found to consist largely of covered road-blocks, sniper fire, and scattered uncoordinated pockets of resistance. The 157th fanned out and rapidly advanced inland and along the coast toward Sainte-Maxime. At 19.00, the 1st Battalion had taken two objectives and was north-west of Plan de la Tour with a motorised patrol on its way toward Vidauban. The 2nd Battalion had seized and secured its objectives, the 3rd had encountered no resistance on the beaches but was held up for a short time before taking Sainte-Maxime.' (US Army)** *Right:* **This is the N98 coast road as it appears today between La Nartelle and Cap des Sardinaux.**

Camel Green. While men of the 141st Infantry disembark from *LCI(L) 221,* a bulldozer of the US Navy clears the roads leading from the beach to the N98 coast road some distance inland. In the background, Cap du Dramont. (US Army)

CAMEL

On the right wing, three beaches had been attributed to the 36th Infantry Division: Camel Green and Camel Red on both sides of Saint-Raphaël, and Camel Blue at the head of the Anthéor cove. Two battalions of the 141st Infantry were to land on Camel Green, the division's primary beach, while the regiment's 1st Battalion landed ten kilometres to the north-east on small Camel Blue. The 143rd Infantry was to follow the 141st Infantry ashore at Camel Green and drive rapidly west through Saint-Raphaël to support the landing of the 142nd Infantry on Camel Red by 2 p.m. in the afternoon. At the head of the Fréjus gulf, Camel Red was a prize target for it promised to be the best beach in the entire landing zone for the disembarkation of men and equipment.

The 36th Division's reputation as 'hard luck' unit seemed to be confirmed as its assigned landing area was one where the Germans had concentrated their main defences. That part of the coastline from the Argens river to the Anthéor cove was defended by the II. Bataillon of Grenadier-Regiment 765, backed by a field artillery bat-



Two tank landing craft, *LCT 1041* and *LCT 785,* unload DUKWs from the 540th Engineer Combat Regiment. (US Army)

Camel Green. *Above:* **As another LCT unloads its cargo of ambulances, the US Navy bulldozers continue clearing a path across the rocky beach. In the background lies Ile d'Or (the golden island) where in the early 19th century, M. Auguste Lutaud had a tower built and dubbed himself 'King of the Ile d'Or'. For 20 years, the eccentric Auguste I organised sumptuous parties on his small kingdom where the then jet-set of the Riviera had to be seen. (US Army)** *Below:* **Today, Dramont beach is another of the most popular beaches on the Riviera but Ile d'Or is still privately owned.**

Pushing south-west along the coast from Camel Green, the 143rd Infantry encountered determined resistance and failed to take Saint-Raphaël by the designated time on August 15. Nevertheless, this was achieved by nightfall. Next morning a team of US engineers cross the bridge at the western end of the town. (Another picture taken a few days later by the Signal Corps shows the concrete casemates seen on this side of the bridge being blown up to enlarge the passage.) (US Army)

Left: **Formal juncture with the 1st Airborne Task Force was achieved about 8.30 p.m. on the 15th when a patrol of the 45th Division moving north along the D25 mountain road met men of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion south of Le Muy. According to the original caption, these paratroopers (of the 463rd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion) walking through Sainte-Maxime on the morning of the 16th were the first paratroops 'to get back to the beach area after their jump'. The marking on the truck on the left indicates that it belonged to the 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Division. (US Army)** *Right:* **We found that this picture has been taken in the main street of Sainte-Maxime, now the Rue du Général de Gaulle.**

talion and one naval battery. Near Fréjus, the III. Bataillon of the regiment was in reserve and the sector north of Anthéor was held by the IV. Bataillon of Reserve-Grenadier-Regiment 239, another Osttruppen battalion, this one comprising Russian troops.

Recognising the importance of the Fréjus sector, the Germans had built strong defences in the area. They had planted rows of mined tetrahedrons on the shoreline and built a two-metre-high anti-tank wall with a three-metre-deep ditch along its seaward side, as well as deploying two rows of barbed wire and extensive minefields. There were machine-gun embrasures in the anti-tank wall and several strong points just behind it. Five artillery batteries, ranging from 75mm to 105mm, dominated the beach and an anti-tank gun unit, the Artillerie-Pak-Abteilung 1038, had deployed about ten of the newest 88mm guns.

The 141st Infantry leading the assault landed on schedule at 9 a.m. against little opposition. Some machine-gun fire welcomed the first waves and sporadic shelling harassed the operation later in the morning but the Osttruppen surrendered as soon as the troops began to advance. By 10 a.m., the 141st Infantry had secured both Camel Green and Camel Blue, but on moving inland they came up against much stronger opposition.

The 143rd Infantry followed up without difficulty on Camel Green and turned westwards towards Saint-Raphaël and Camel Red. The leading troops met stubborn opposition from a series of strong points controlling the shore road and at 2 p.m., when landing was scheduled to begin at Camel Red, the 143rd Infantry had still not reached Saint-Raphaël. On the other side, the 45th Division could not assist as it was still five kilometres away. Consequently, the 142nd Infantry had to land on Camel Red without any of the scheduled support.

From 11 a.m., minesweepers clearing the approaches off Camel Red came under fire from artillery. Nearly 100 B-24 heavy bombers flew in just after midday, dropping about 200 tons of bombs on the German defences, but when the minesweepers tried to resume their job at around 12.30 p.m., it appeared that the aerial bombardment had failed to silence the German guns. The sweepers again retired while the naval task force — a battleship, two cruisers and four destroyers — opened up for a further bombardment. This also failed to silence the batteries and when the leading waves of LCVPs started toward shore, they came under heavy shell-fire. At 2 p.m., Captain Leo B. Schulten, commanding the Camel assault group, decided to postpone the assault for half an hour and informed Rear Admiral Spencer S. Lewis, the naval task force commander, of the situation. At 2.15 p.m., having been unable to contact Major General John E. Dahlquist, the 36th Division commander, ashore on Camel Green, Lewis directed Schulten to cancel the Camel Red assault and instead to land the 142nd Infantry on Camel Green which they did from about 3.15 p.m.

This decision was later strongly criticised by Truscott who termed it 'a grave error which merited reprimand at least, and certainly no congratulation' but his criticism

Left: **Combat Command 1 of the French 1ère Division Blindée landed over Delta beach during the night of the 15th/16th and assembled near Sainte-Maxime. In the town, the local population surge around this half-track asking for food which the soldiers 'give out with great gusto' according to the photographer who took this picture the next morning (US Army).** *Above:* **Another comparison found on the Rue du Général de Gaulle.**

Left: **Following the landing of CC1 on Delta, 'Garbo Force', the first French follow-up forces, started to come ashore, some on the 3rd Division beaches near Cavalaire and the remainder in Saint-Tropez bay. Here on the beach at Beauvallon, four kilometres west of Sainte-Maxime, an LCI(L) unloads troops who appear to be from the French 3ème Division d'Infanterie Algérienne. Two infantry landing craft can be identified: *LCI(L) 526* and *LCI(L) 554*. We have already seen *LCI 554* loading troops at Naples on page 13. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **Saint-Tropez lies in the background, on the other side of the bay.**

appears unjustified for he based his judgement mainly on the fact that Lewis' decision delayed the landing of CC1. In fact the French combat command force landed over Delta beaches during the night of the 15th/16th and assembled ashore earlier than it would have done if it had landed over Camel Red on the 16th as scheduled.

During the night, the Luftwaffe attacked the 'Dragoon' bridgehead and it appears that one aircraft, a Dornier 217 of KG 100, succeeded in guiding a radio-controlled bomb to its target — *LST 282* off Agay. The landing ship sank with 40 casualties and several pieces of artillery.

'Dragoon' had been a total success. Overall the casualties on D-Day were much lower than expected, with some 95 killed and 385 wounded. Churchill, who had remained firmly against the operation to the end, watched the landings from the destroyer HMS *Kimberley*. On the 16th, he cabled Roosevelt that 'everything seems to be working like clockwork here, and there have been few casualties so far'. This same day, he telegraphed King George VI: 'Your Majesty knows my opinion about the strategy but the perfect execution of the plan was deeply interesting'. There was no doubt, he added, 'that Eisenhower's operation made a great diversion. The fact that this is the precise opposite of what was intended need not be stressed at the present time.'

CC1 moved inland in the direction of Brignoles. A few hundred metres further along the coast road from Beauvallon, six of its M5 light tanks halt at the eastern entrance of Port-Grimaud. The bridge visible between the two leading tanks is still there today. (ECPArmées)

Left: **While CC1 advanced inland, the 3ème DIA formed up to start the push westwards in the direction of Collobrières. These soldiers who have halted for a breather by the side of the N98A near Bertaud, three kilometres west of Saint-Tropez, are members of this division. Note the old-style French helmet of 1940 worn by one of them. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **Lengths of the concrete and steel barrier that lined the road were still there when we took this comparison.**

Scattered drops and failure of the gliders to land artillery and anti-tank guns had left the 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade insufficient strength to take Le Muy on D-Day as planned. The 550th Glider Infantry Battalion, together with elements of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, undertook the task shortly after midnight on the 16th. They made little progress against stubborn resistance and withdrew by daylight. They started out again at 9 a.m. and, with artillery support, slowly pushed into the town. That afternoon, tanks of the 191st Tank Battalion moved down the mountain road across the Maures at which point the last defenders surrendered. (US Army) *Left:* **Le Muy on the day of its liberation.** *Right:* **Little changed in over 50 years.**

AUGUST 16, ADVANCE TO THE BLUE LINE

All attempts by the Germans on August 15 to mount a counter-attack against the landing area failed. They finally managed to assemble a force amounting to some four battalions of the 244. Infanterie-Division and they attacked from Vidauban at 7 a.m. the next morning. Half an hour later, they entered Les Arcs, throwing out the small paratroop force which held the town and gaining a foothold on the heights to the north. However, their success was short lived. The 517th Parachute Infantry dug in along the heights north and east of the town, the leading troops of the 180th Infantry advancing from Delta soon joined the battle, and by 3.30 p.m. Vidauban had been cleared and the German force in Les Arcs surrounded. Under the cover of darkness, the trapped Germans withdrew to the west. Later on the 16th, the paratroopers cleared Draguignan and captured part of the LXII. Armeekorps headquarters.

Meanwhile, on the VI Corps far left, west of Cavalaire, the 7th Infantry had pushed along the coastal road and by nightfall on the 16th, patrols were in Le Lavandou. Inland, the rest of the regiment met stronger resistance when both the German defences and rugged terrain delayed its progress. Just to the north, the 30th Infantry broke through a heavily wooded section of the Maures mountains and by the evening of the 16th, the regiment controlled the main N97 road north-east of Toulon. On the corps' right flank, the 36th Division had by now secured the coast and pushed weak and dispersed German elements off the Esterel mountains. Having joined with the paratroops at Le Muy, the 36th occupied a broad area along the Blue Line from Théoule-sur-Mer to the Draguignan sector. In the centre, the 45th Division had cleared the area south of the Argens river from Le Luc to Fréjus. By the end of D + 1, save for its western part, the VI Corps' forces had reached and crossed the Blue Line.

German opposition had proved much weaker than expected. Resistance had been disorganised, counter-attacks weak and uncoordinated, and interrogation reports confirmed the low calibre of the German units facing the Allies. Eager to take advantage of the German weakness, Truscott quickly decided to begin executing the second phase of the operation — to launch an aggressive drive to the west and north-west — and, with Patch's approval, he issued the

On the afternoon of August 16, elements of the 157th Infantry, 45th Division, finally cleared Vidauban. Here, Private Aurelio Betancourt inspects a 20mm AA gun left behind by the retreating Germans. (US Army)

Left: **On the eastern flank of the 'Dragoon' bridgehead, the Germans had retreated to the Italian border, so General Patch had no choice but to maintain strong holding forces along the Franco-Italian frontier. Made responsible for this front on August 20, the 1st Airborne Task Force pressed eastwards against no opposition and occupied Cannes on August 24. This picture of Cannes was taken two days later. Note the shell damage. (US Army)** *Right:* **Rue de la Rampe today.**

Pressing on eastwards, the 1st Airborne Task Force drove through Nice on the 30th. Guided by a member of the FFI, this squad was pictured passing the Col d'Eze, a pass 512 metres high, eight kilometres east of Nice. (ECPArmées)

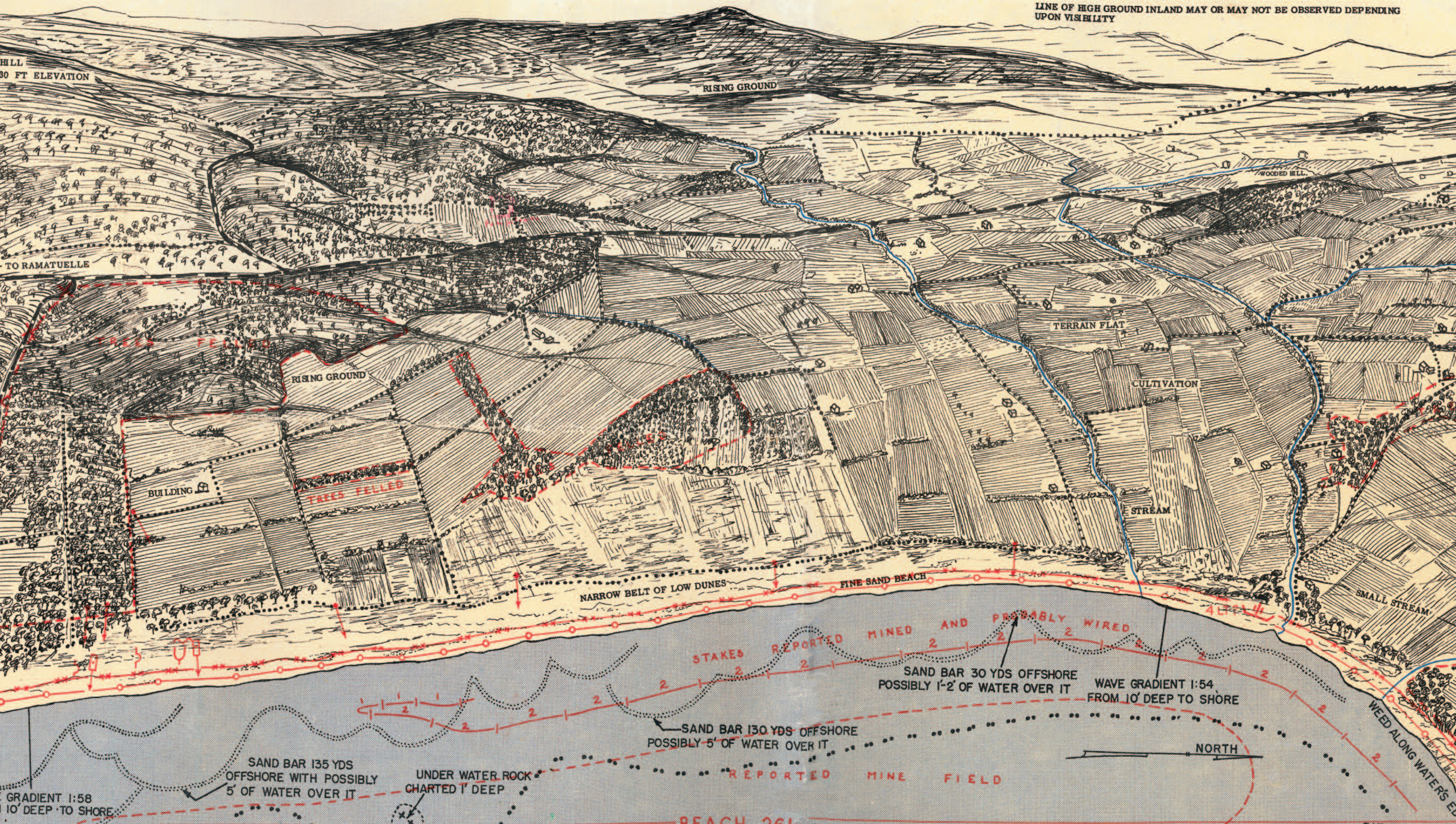
Left: **Three kilometres further east along the Grande Corniche, the airborne troopers approach the junction with the road coming up from Eze. From here, the Italian border is about 20 kilometres away. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **This place is still the same today but the famous Grande Corniche (then the N7) has now been downgraded to the D2564.**

Colour page (28)
to go here.

No. P — 4
BEACH 261 (North)

PREPARED BY COMMANDER U.S. EIGHTH FLEET
N-2 SECTION

TOP SECRET — BIGOT
(Until departure for combat operation when this sheet becomes Restricted)


LINE OF HIGH GROUND INLAND MAY OR MAY NOT BE OBSERVED DEPENDING UPON VISIBILITY
HILL
30 FT ELEVATION
RISING GROUND
WOODED HILL
TO RAMATUELLE
TREES FELLED
RISING GROUND
TERRAIN FLAT
CULTIVATION
BUILDING
TREES FELLED
STREAM
NARROW BELT OF LOW DUNES
FINE SAND BEACH
SMALL STREAM
STAKES REPORTED MINED AND PROBABLY WIRED
SAND BAR 30 YDS OFFSHORE POSSIBLY 1-2' OF WATER OVER IT
WAVE GRADIENT 1:54 FROM 10' DEEP TO SHORE
SAND BAR 130 YDS OFFSHORE POSSIBLY 5' OF WATER OVER IT
NORTH
SAND BAR 135 YDS OFFSHORE WITH POSSIBLY 5' OF WATER OVER IT
UNDER WATER ROCK CHARTED 1' DEEP
REPORTED MINE FIELD
GRADIENT 1:58
10' DEEP TO SHORE
WEED ALONG WATER'S E

Colour page (29)
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Left: **Charged with seizing Brignoles on the right wing of the 3rd Division, the 30th Infantry Regiment started out on August 17 with a fire-fight at Le Luc which was cleared after a four-hour action. These men of the 30th Infantry were pictured later that same day in Flassans, ten kilometres further west. In the background stands a Sherman tank of the French CC1. (US Army)** *Right:* **The N7 now bypasses Flassans leaving the main street a quiet and peaceful backwater.**

order before dark on August 16. The 3rd Division was to press on the west flank to the line of the Réal Martin and Gapeau rivers and hold there until the French IIème Corps d'Armée could reach it to continue the drive toward Toulon on or about August 20. To the north, the 45th Division was to push to the Barjols area, and in between CC1 was also to head westwards. On the corps' eastern flank, the 36th Division was to relieve the airborne in the Le Muy — Les Arcs area and then, leaving one regiment on the coast to cover the flank, was to assemble ready to advance north-westwards.

After the failure of his attempt near Les Arcs, General Wiese concluded that it was now too late to mount a counter-attack and more important to establish a defensive line in front of the invaders in order to gain time to complete the switch of forces to the east side of the Rhône — mainly the 11. Panzer-Division and the remaining elements of the 198. and 338. Infanterie-Divisions. He assigned the responsibility for holding two lines of defence facing eastward to General der Infanterie Baptist Kniess, the commander of LXXXV. Armeekorps, the first line extending northward from the eastern defences of Toulon to Barjols, the second about 20 kilometres further west.

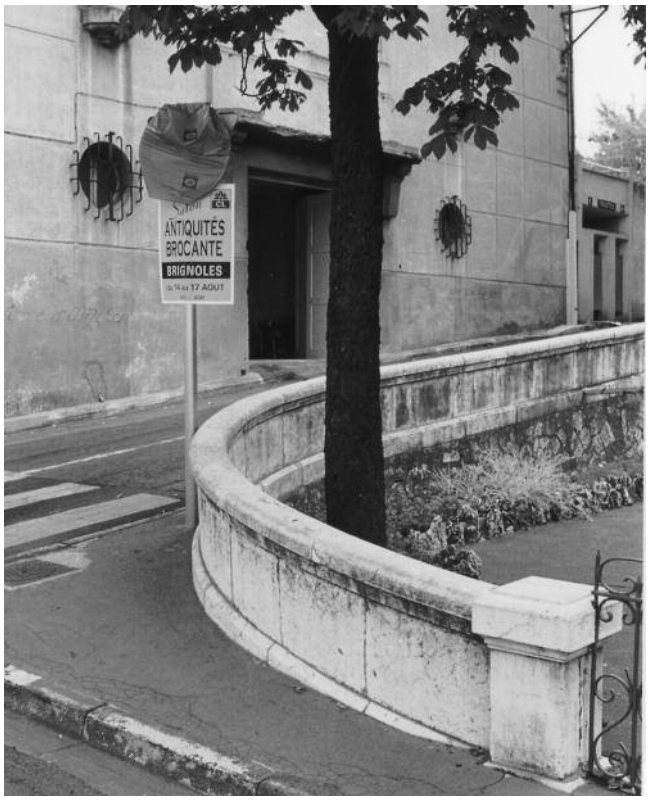
Nevertheless, the Allied advance was so swift that LXXXV. Armeekorps proved unable to even establish the first line of defence before the area was occupied, so on August 18 Wiese directed a general fall-back to his second line but even these plans were overtaken by events. By the morning of August 19, CC1 had reached Saint-Maximin, breaching the second defence line even before it was established.

GERMAN WITHDRAWAL

On August 16, faced with the Allied breakout at Avranches, the failure of his own counter-attack at Mortain, and the consequent risk of an envelopment of two of his armies in Normandy, Hitler agreed to the immediate withdrawal from southern France. On August 17, OKW (Wehrmacht High Command) accordingly issued orders to Armeegruppe G.

That same day, August 17, the Germans moved Maréchal Philippe Pétain, who headed the French government from Vichy (his seat of government in central France) to Belfort in eastern France, just 50 kilometres from the German border.

The OKW withdrawal orders were sent to Armeegruppe G in two parts on August 17. The first, pertaining mainly to forces on the Atlantic coast, was received by Blaskowitz at



Left: **The battle for Brignoles itself lasted until the morning of the 19th when it fell to the French and American attackers. In the town centre, Private Llyod Corun of Company F, 30th Infantry Regiment, takes it easy. German signs can be seen on the tree behind him. (US Army)** *Right:* **From then . . . to now and no change in this corner of Brignoles.**

Above: **Advancing on the left of the 30th Infantry, in the centre of the divisional axis, the 15th Infantry reached Forcalqueiret, 12 kilometres south of Brignoles, on the 18th. These are men of the 2nd Battalion.** *Below:* **We found that the picture had been taken on the D554 at the northern end of Forcalqueiret, looking south. (US Army)**

11.15 a.m. but the second, which concerned the 19. Armee, was not received at all that day. Communications were then in such a bad state that Blaskowitz did not get it until late on the morning of the 18th and by then Ultra decrypt sources had supplied Patch with a copy of the order. Thus the two opposing army commanders, Patch and Wiese, were reading the same order at the same time!

Upon receiving the first part of the OKW directive, Blaskowitz issued orders to General der Pioniere Karl Sachs, the commander of the LXIV. Armeekorps, who had been in charge of the Atlantic sector since the 1. Armee was moved north on August 10. He was to immediately assemble his force — about 70,000 men plus 10,000 civilians — and move eastwards south of the Loire river to join up with the main body of Armeegruppe G near Dijon. To be left behind were the garrisons of three port areas that Hitler had directed to be turned into fortresses and held to the bitter end: La Rochelle, Gironde Nord and Gironde Süd. Also, a small force was to stay in Bordeaux until the few U-Boats that were undergoing repair in the harbour could put to sea.

Blaskowitz did not have to concern himself with his far left flank on the Italian border as OKW had already transferred the 148. and 157. Reserve-Divisions to Ob. Südwest in Italy which was to handle their retirement to the Alps. However, to withdraw those parts of the 19. Armee that were engaged in the centre against the American and French

invaders was a more difficult task. To ensure a swift move northwards up the Rhône valley, with the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps on the west bank and the LXXXV. Armeekorps on the east, Blaskowitz called for the latter corps to retire through three successive defence lines which were to hold the invaders east of the Rhône and south of the Durance river. Meanwhile, the 11. Panzer-Division and elements of the 198. and 338. Infanterie-Divisions that were west of the Rhône were to cross the river straightaway to bolster the defences against the advancing Allies. Detailed orders were issued, the first of the defence lines having to be reached during the night of the 19th/20th; the second during the night of the 20th/21st, and the third before daylight on the 22nd. As ordered by Hitler, the garrisons of Toulon and Marseille were to turn the ports into fortresses and fight on to ensure that the harbour facilities did not fall into Allied hands intact.

Though Patch knew from Ultra about the German withdrawal plans, he decided he could not act on the intelligence for the time being. For further operations inland, Patch believed that he needed the harbours at Toulon and Marseille, and on August 19 he made their capture the main army task. In consequence, he limited the western advance of VI Corps to Aix-en-Provence.

That same day, August 19, Blaskowitz withdrew his headquarters from Toulouse to Pierrelatte, about 50 kilometres north of Avignon, and for three days, while the 11. Panzer-Division strove to cross to the east bank of the Rhône on three ferries near the town of Avignon, he and his staff remained much concerned about an Allied drive to Avignon and across the Rhône. However, as a result of Patch's order, General Kniess was able to withdraw his corps without interference and all units pulled back on the final line of defence during the night of August 21/22. By the following morning, those forces scheduled to cross the Rhône from the west were on the eastern bank. On the 23rd, while the Germans withdrew their forces over the Durance and Blaskowitz moved his headquarters to Dijon, Truscott kept to his orders and cautiously limited the advance of the 3rd Division westwards, thus losing a superb opportunity to cut off a major part of LXXXV. Armeekorps south of the Durance. The remainder of Kniess' forces crossed the river during the night of August 23/24, and next morning Allied troops entered Avignon unopposed. The focus of operations was about to shift to the north.

On August 16, Hitler agreed to withdraw German forces from southern France and the following morning, the 19. Armee started to pull back northwards up the Rhône valley. *Above:* **As camouflaged vehicles move north, a SdKfz 251/8 (an armoured half-track armed with a 75mm infantry gun) of the 11. Panzer-Division races southwards to bolster up the rearguard. (Bundesarchiv)** *Below:* **The same spot on the N7, about two kilometres south of Loriol.**

Jean Paul was very pleased when he found a roll of film in the Bundesarchiv at Koblenz containing a series of stills, uncaptioned, but showing this actual withdrawal. Never before have these pictures been accurately identified, like the one at the top of this page which is the second frame on the roll. *Above left:* **Frame 6. Jean Paul found that it had been taken in the centre of Loriol where another convoy of camouflaged vehicles had halted probably because the crossing of the Drôme river just north of the town was a bottleneck. The bridge there had been badly damaged during the night of August 16/17 when men of the FFI blew out 20 metres of roadway. (Bundesarchiv)** *Right:* **The N7 now bypasses Loriol but the Croix de Malte hotel is still in business in what is now a pleasant town freed of thundering traffic — then and now!**

Frame 7 shows German engineers completing the construction of a bridge across the river at Livron, some distance upstream from the destroyed bridge. They were lucky that in the summertime, the Drôme falls to a low level. (Bundesarchiv)

The Drôme having been crossed, the withdrawal northwards continues. Transport was in short supply and many of the men had to walk up the seemingly endless N7. These two pictures, frames 11 and 12, were taken at Fiancey, five kilometres north of the river, and it was the sign on them which gave the first clue to the subsequent identification of the whole series. (Bundesarchiv)

Frame 16. The photographer was some distance to the north of Lyon when he pictured a camouflaged convoy which had pulled up under the protective cover of the trees lining the road. Two PzKpfw IVs of the 11. Panzer-Division face southwards ready to try to halt the Allied troops which the crews know are advancing towards them. (Bundesarchiv)

Left: **On a hill just east of Hyères, the Mauvanne battery comprised four 150mm guns in M272 casemates with a command post in a type M262 casemate** *(below centre).* **It was manned by the 3. Batterie of Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 627 under Oberleutnant Ernst Gfrörer. On August 19, men of the Commando d'Afrique assaulted the battery and captured most of its crew. As they did at Cap Nègre (see page 14), the commandos later restaged their attack at Mauvanne for the camera. (ECPArmées)** *Above right:* **Though the gun has been removed, the pivot on which it was mounted can still be seen.**

TOULON AND MARSEILLE

Original plans had called for the first elements of the French forces to land between August 16-18 and the second echelon from the 21st. Seeking to take advantage of the German weakness, Patch decided to accelerate the unloading of the French forces and, in conjunction with de Lattre, he pushed up the schedule. The first echelon was landed mainly on the 16th which allowed the transport ships to return quickly to Corsica to bring in the second echelon on the 18th. By nightfall, most of the troops of the IIème Corps d'Armée were ashore although with only half of their armour, vehicles and artillery. Nevertheless, rather than wait until August 25 when all the vehicles and equipment would be landed, de Lattre proposed to attack immediately, asking only that CC1 be returned to him at once and that additional artillery ammunition be supplied. Patch agreed to the acceleration, released CC1, supplied the required ammunition, and at noon on the 19th, directed de Lattre to move toward Toulon and Marseille.

Left: **The guns that armed this battery, 15cm Torpedobootskanone C/36, had a range of over 19 kilometres. As the name implies, this weapon had begun its life as a gun for motor torpedo boats but from 1940 it was diverted to coastal defence purposes. In this case, it was mounted in a casemate with its original ship's turret-like shield. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **This is the easternmost casemate as it appears today. In front of it, a memorial recalls the commandos' feat of arms.**

The original plan had been to attack Toulon and Marseille in succession but de Lattre, eager to press on before the Germans had time to reorganise, decided to move against both ports concurrently. Consequently, he divided his forces: the first group detached to attack Toulon along the coast while the second was to encircle the city from the north and drive westwards to Marseille. Under Général Edgar de Larminat (commanding the IIème Corps d'Armée, not yet activated as a corps headquarters), the first group consisted of two infantry divisions (the 1ère DMI and the 9ème DIC) and some tanks. Under Général Aimé de Monsabert, the 3ème DIA commander, the second group comprised the 3ème DIA and CC1.

The German garrison in Toulon consisted of about 18,000 men, of whom nearly 3,000 were Luftwaffe and 5,500 naval personnel, plus naval and army artillery and anti-aircraft batteries. The large harbour was surrounded by rugged hills and, given time, could have been turned into a formidable fortress but the defences were strongest in the wrong places and the defenders lacked time to reorganise.

However, the swift French advance had cut off Generalleutnant Johannes Baessler, the garrison commander, from the city and Admiral Heinrich Ruhfus had to take command. He did his best to strengthen the weak sectors north and west of the city and also decided to evacuate the civilian population of some 100,000 men, women and children.

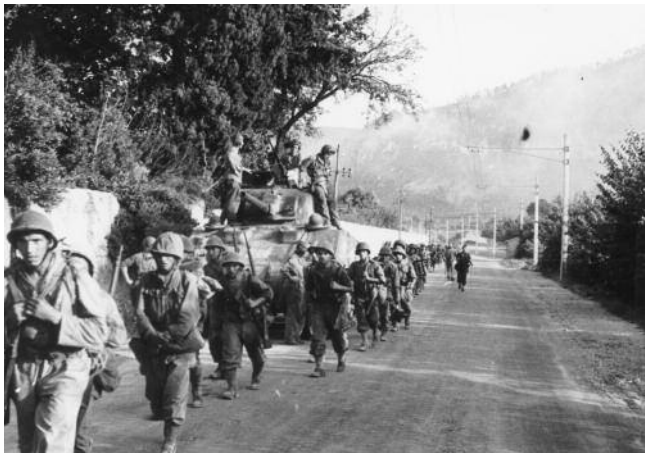
Having silenced a 75mm anti-tank gun in the Avenue du XVème Corps in the western part of Toulon, French soldiers proceed to tow the gun into a suitable position to turn it against the Germans. One of the German crew lies dead in the foreground.

Above: **Toulon fell on August 26 and the French lost no time to celebrate its liberation. Already the same day, Jeeps, half-tracks and an M8 howitzer motor carriage paraded through Place Gabriel Péri. (US Army)** *Below:* **The Palais de Justice stands in the left background, then as now.**

The French invested Toulon on the morning of August 20. Attacking from the east, de Larminat's force met strong resistance and advanced slowly, reducing a series of strong points one by one. In the north, although advancing across rough mountains, de Monsabert had an easier time and his men succeeded in outflanking the German defences. While the 3ème Régiment de Spahis Algériens completed the encirclement of Toulon from the north and west, de Monsabert's leading elements pressed westwards and soon reached strongly-defended Aubagne, the key to the eastern approaches to Marseille. De Larminat renewed his attack on Toulon with energy on the 21st but progress was disappointing in front of stiffening resistance. One tank company succeeded in breaking through and penetrating to about five kilometres from the centre of the city but it was soon cut off; holding out for 36 hours, they took heavy casualties.

In the evening of the 21st, an argument broke out between de Lattre and de Larminat. The latter wanted to take command of the entire operation against Toulon and Marseille with his IIème Corps d'Armée but de Lattre refused and, after a heated discussion, dismissed de Larminat and took direct control of the operation himself.

Day after day, French pressure against Toulon increased; strong points were overrun one after another, and slowly the defenders were forced back into the inner fortifications. Isolated groups resisting in the forts overlooking the town were persuaded to surrender and the German defences progressively lost cohesion until the last organised resistance in the town ended on August 26. After two days of intense air and naval bombardment, Admiral Ruhfus surrendered on the morning of the 28th together with 2,500 men on the Saint-Mandrier peninsula across the harbour. Toulon had been secured a full week ahead of schedule and the French reported to have taken 17,000 prisoners.



Left: **Probing westwards, the French vanguard came across the strongly defended town of Aubagne, the key to the eastern approach to Marseille, but bypassed the positions by diverting to the south. Here, infantry of the 7ème Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens and tanks of CC1 arriving from Gémenos advance on the N96. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **Now renumbered the N396, this stretch of road has changed little since 1944. In the background, the western extremity of the famous Sainte-Baume mountain.**

Under Generalleutnant Hans Schaefer, the commander of the 244. Infanterie-Division, the Marseille garrison amounted to about 13,000 men, including nearly 4,000 Luftwaffe and 2,500 Kriegsmarine personnel, most of the remainder being from the 244. Infanterie-Division. The land approaches to the city favoured the defenders but, again, lack of time and equipment precluded the Germans from building fortifications; in fact they were even less extensive than those at Toulon. As the French forces came closer, the FFI inside the city became bolder. At the same time, the inhabitants — some half a million — were becoming increasingly hostile and on the morning of August 22 a major uprising broke out in the city.

Meanwhile, having probed aggressively to the west, de Monsabert had come across German forces holding out in strength at Aubagne, just east of Marseille. He ordered the position to be bypassed and on the 22nd his forces were approaching the northern and eastern outskirts of the city. By the evening, the French were within eight kilometres of the heart of the city and making preparations to assault the harbour area the following day. However, concerned about the dispersal of his forces and the lack of supplies, de Lattre warned de Monsabert not to begin a full battle for the city and to limit his attack to clearing the suburbs until more forces arrived. De Monsabert obeyed the order with 'flexibility' and did not prevent elements of the 7ème Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens from breaking into the eastern suburbs of Marseille in the early hours of the 23rd. Encouraged by crowds of exuberant civilians, the leading troops made for the city centre and by 10 a.m. had reached the harbour area. Later in the day, the rest of the regiment and tanks of CC1 followed from the north. For the next three days, while more French forces were brought in, the battle in the city turned into a house-to-house and strong point-to-strong point fight. Finally, on the evening of August 27, Schaefer agreed to discuss terms with de Monsabert and a formal surrender came into being at 1 p.m., August 28 — the same day Toulon fell. The French reported having taken 11,000 prisoners.

Meanwhile, other elements of the 3ème DIA cleared the neighbouring hills of Germans surprised by the swift French advance and brought them down to Gémenos. (ECPArmées)

Here in front of the town hall, prisoners were once made to tramp across a Nazi flag as they were marched off to a POW enclosure.

The 7ème Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens entered Marseille early on August 23 with elements of CC1 (1ère Division Blindée) following that evening. This Sherman of the 2ème Cuirassiers is advancing towards the city centre. (ECP Armées)

More Shermans and an M8 armoured car, nicknamed *Les Pyramides,* line up in front of the Palais de Longchamp. (ECPArmées)

The first two weeks following the Allied landing in southern France exceeded all expectations as to the speed with which the objectives were taken. For the cost of 4,500 French and 2,700 American casualties, more than 57,000 prisoners had been taken and two major ports had been made available to Allied shipping a month ahead schedule. However, the direct effect of 'Dragoon' on 'Overlord' was virtually nil as Ob. West had already transferred all available forces from southern France to Normandy. Nevertheless, 'Dragoon' forced the withdrawal and scattering of all German forces from southern France, thus removing the threat of pressure against the long southern right flank of the US 12th Army Group advancing through northern France.

Left: **The armour of CC1 soon reached the Cannebière, Marseille's main and famous thoroughfare. Here, another Sherman of the 2ème Cuirassiers covers the whole length of the street.**

This picture was taken at 7.30 p.m. on the 23rd while the Germans were still in control of most of the city. (ECPArmées) *Right:* **The church on the left is the Réformés.**

The Germans held their ground and for three days the battle in Marseille became a matter of house to house fighting from street to street and from strong point to strong point with eager FFI support. *Left:* **From the corner of Boulevard Dugomier, men of the FFI fire across the Cannebière to the Grand Hôtel in which Germans have taken up position. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **No major changes have taken place in over 50 years in this corner of Marseille.**

At the other corner of the block, men of the 3ème DIA set up a 57mm anti-tank gun ready to fire down the length of Boulevard Dugomier. Yet locals look on casually as if they were already watching a victory parade! (ECPArmées)

Left: **The formal surrender became effective at 1 p.m. on the 28th when emissaries accompanied by a German went to Viste fort to arrange terms. With no indication as to the location, Jean Paul had not a little difficulty in tracing this particular street until a resident, Max Valéry, took him to Avenue Minerve, on the heights north of the city. (ECPArmées)** *Right:* **Many changes have taken place here but the house visible on the left in the 1944 picture still remains, hidden by trees.**

THE BATTLE OF MONTÉLIMAR

General Truscott was dissatisfied with the arrangement for his control over CC1, which was due to serve initially as the VI Corps' reserve, so, anticipating an argument with de Lattre as to its employment, on August 1 he decided to organise a light mechanised combat command from his own forces. Under Brigadier General Frederick B. Butler, the VI Corps deputy commander, the brigade-sized task force included one battalion of the 143rd Infantry, two tank companies of the 753rd Tank Battalion, one company of the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, the 59th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and a number of support units. Because of its late organisation, the force had not been loaded as a separate entity and its various elements could not be assembled inland before D + 2.

Task Force Butler started out early on August 18 and by noon had reached the Verdon river north of Barjols. During the drive, at Draguignan, Troop C of the 117th Cavalry had bumped into elements of the LXII. Armeekorps that had escaped the airborne troops and captured the corps commander, General der Infanterie Ferdinand Neuling. However, all bridges in the area had been

Above: **Riding on tank destroyers of the 645th TD Battalion, men of the 45th Infantry Division push on westward on August 18 but in the late afternoon they were to come up against stiff opposition at Tavernes and Barjols. (US Army)** *Below:* **JP found that this shot had been taken on the D560, three kilometres north-west of Salernes.**

Left: **Early on the 18th, Task Force Butler started out northwards and by noon, the leading elements had reached the Verdon river. Here, a reconnaissance patrol with Jeeps and M8 armoured cars ford the river beside the damaged bridge. (US Army)** *Right:* **The original caption said that this picture was taken 'in the Riez area' but JP had difficulty in finding this bridge until he discovered that it is now under 15 meters of water! Actually this spot, eight kilometres south of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, was inundated when the Sainte-Croix dam was built in the early 1970s and the D957 now bypasses a large artificial lake.**

The cables to the large suspension bridge over the Durance river near Mirabeau, 30 kilometres north-east of Aix-en-Provence, were severed but a footbridge was quickly built to span the gap and the 45th Division's engineers also soon established a pontoon bridge for vehicles further upstream. This picture was taken on the 20th. (US Army)

Meanwhile, troops of the 3rd Division entered the city of Aix-en-Provence to a 'cheerful greeting of the French' on Place de la Rotonde. (US Army)

destroyed and, in spite of assistance by the FFI, the force was unable to get across the river before late afternoon. Then, with only four hours of daylight left, Butler decided to wait for the arrival of his supply column due to reach him that night.

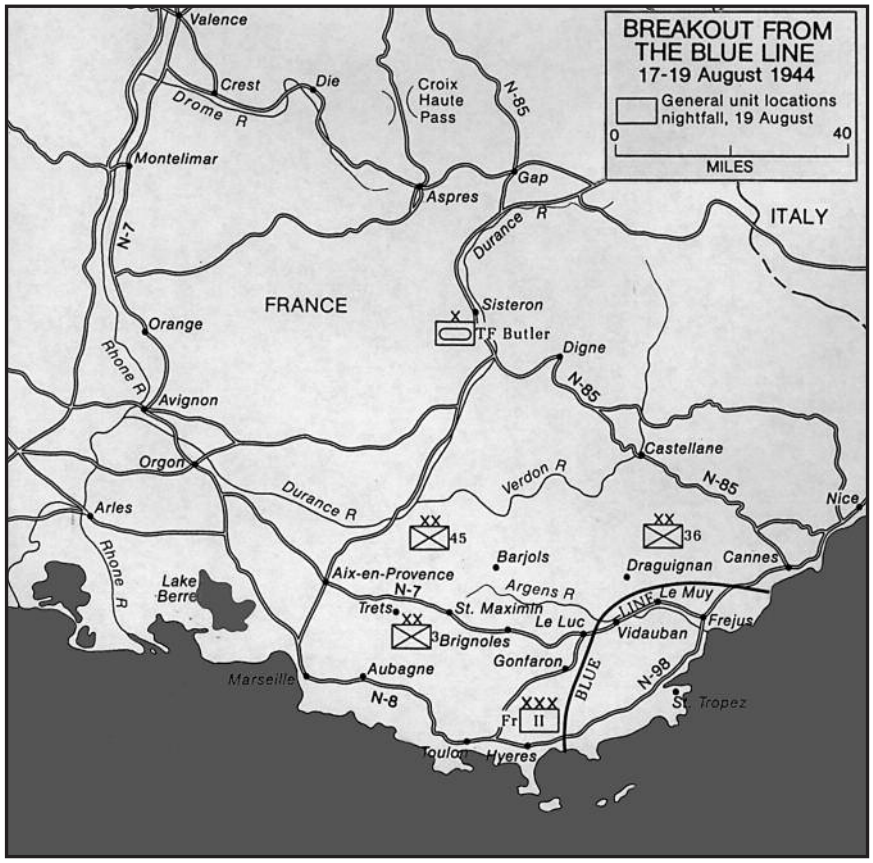
Next morning, the task force resumed its advance with the bulk of the units having crossed to the west bank of the Durance to take advantage of better roads while two troops of cavalry advanced along the eastern bank. After a few skirmishes with isolated German elements, the cavalry entered Sisteron unopposed at about 6 p.m. The main column joined them some time later whereupon Butler re-assembled his force, refuelled his vehicles and waited for Truscott's orders to advance — either north to Grenoble or west to the Rhône valley. At noon, Patch had directed Truscott to alert one infantry division for a drive north to Grenoble and on the morning of August 20, the 36th Division started out to follow the trail of Task Force Butler.

Around noon on August 20, Truscott met Patch to request the latter's approval to send Task Force Butler west to the Rhône valley

Left: **The 45th Division pressed on westwards and soon reached Pertuis, a major road junction 20 kilometres north of Aix-en-Provence. In the town main square, troops have a quick wash and brush up in the fountain. (US Army)** *Right:* **As in every town, motor cars are now master but the fountain in Place Jean Jaurès still runs.**

to block the German escape routes. Patch agreed but Truscott was then so worried by the uncertainty of the situation in the south that it was not before 8.45 p.m. that he radioed Butler, whose task force was still grouped in the Sisteron area, to move with all speed to Montélimar.

By daybreak, Butler had regrouped and was proceeding westward without interference so that by late afternoon his vanguard had reached Crest, about 20 kilometres east of the Rhône, at which point they turned south to the Marsanne area. Taking FFI soldiers with them as infantry support, they probed toward La Coucourde and Sauzet, establishing road-blocks and posting Resistance men at key points. In the evening, tanks and tank destroyers opened up on the German convoys travelling on the highway down along the Rhône. Two artillery batteries, which had by then reached the Marsanne sector, unlimbered their pieces and added their fire. The threat to the Germans was obviously serious so next morning a Kampfgruppe advanced from Montélimar to deal with it. Forcing the American outpost and FFI back, it advanced as far as Sauzet and Puy. Follow-up elements of Task Force Butler then reached Crest and counter-attacked, clearing Puy in the afternoon.



Below: **When the 11. Panzer-Division counter-attacked on the 25th, Kampfgruppe Thieme retook Grane, eight kilometres downstream of Crest. When the 11. Panzer-Division had to pull back on the 27th, they abandoned this PzKpfw III near Crest. A Diamond 6×6 wrecker recovered it for repair and further 'service with the French'. (US Army)**

The skyline in the background enabled us to trace this field by the side of the D538, some three kilometres north of Crest.

From the 26th, the Germans retreat northwards up the Rhône valley became more and more difficult. Artillery intermittently shelled the road and railway lines north of Montélimar, and Allied aircraft were an increasing nuisance. 'Road of ruin and retreat' is how the original caption described this scene on the N7 north of Montélimar. The remains of a 105mm horse-drawn battery 'caught by American fighter planes' had already been ransacked, first by the GIs and then by the local people. This view was taken looking north with the railway line in the left background. (US Army)

August 28: 'This German convoy of approximately 400 vehicles was destroyed by cannon, mortar and small-arms fire on the outskirts of Montélimar'. (US Army)

The N7 has changed considerably and a precise comparison is difficult, but the hill in the distance enabled Jean Paul to pinpoint this length of the road near the southern entrance of Montélimar.

Meanwhile, the 36th Division had followed Task Force Butler and regrouped in the Sisteron area, but it was still not clear to Dahlquist, the division commander, whether he was to push north to Grenoble or west to Montélimar. Throughout August 21, Patch and Truscott still had their main interest in Toulon and Marseille and it was not before the late evening that Truscott finally ordered Dahlquist to move to Montélimar. Dahlquist spent the 22nd reorienting his scattered division and, worried by his right flank, he allowed his 143rd Infantry to advance to Grenoble and enter the city in the afternoon.

Truscott arrived at the 36th Division's headquarters near Aspres about noon on the 22nd and voiced his dissatisfaction about the division's wide deployment and the fact that it was not yet attacking Montélimar. He wrote a note to Dahlquist, who was absent, insisting that 'the primary mission of the 36th Division is to block the Rhône valley in the gap immediately north of Montélimar'. To reassure Dahlquist about his right flank, Truscott gave him the 179th Infantry of the 45th Division for employment at Grenoble. Throughout the night and morning of the 23rd, greatly hampered by lack of fuel and transportation, Dahlquist and his staff strove to assemble and orient the forces under their command. Still uneasy, Truscott telephoned Dahlquist early on the 23rd to remind him that his task was to halt the German withdrawal up the Rhône valley. Yet, in spite of Truscott's pressure, Dahlquist displayed little energy that day in turning his forces north-east to the Montélimar battle area.

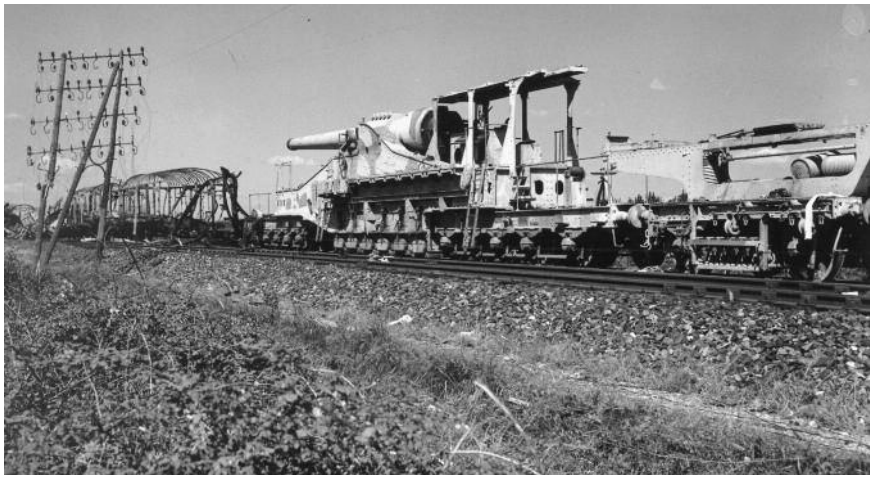
Having recognised the threat posed by the Americans above Montélimar, late on August 21 General Wiese had ordered his most-mobile force, the 11. Panzer-Division, to the threatened area. Fuel shortage, congestion on the roads, and marching at night under black-out conditions delayed the movement and the first sizeable elements did not reach Montélimar before noon on the 23rd. That day, though they sent small battlegroups through to Sauzet, the Germans were mainly occupied in sorting out the situation in Montélimar and organising their move northwards. A similar situation occurred on August 24 with the Germans urging their troops north and the Americans failing to counter the retreat. Expecting German attacks, Dahlquist was becoming increasingly concerned with defending the positions he already held instead of blocking the Rhône valley. On the afternoon of the 24th, he sent no less than four contradictory orders to the 143rd Infantry advancing to Valence until the regiment finally broke contact and headed back to Crest.

That evening, an American liaison officer in a Jeep came across a road-block. As the Germans opened fire, he fled in haste leaving behind Dahlquist's operational plans for the 25th. Now, with a clear picture of the American forces opposing them, Wiese decided to launch a strong counter-attack to clear the whole sector north-east of Montélimar. The 198. Infanterie-Division and several lesser units were put under Generalleutnant Wend von Wietersheim, the commander of the 11. Panzer-Division, who divided the forces under his control into six Kampfgruppen. With the intention of encircling and destroying the whole of the 36th Division, von Wietersheim planned an ambitious and complex operation with several co-ordinated and concentric attacks from south, west and north in the area between Montélimar and the Drôme river.

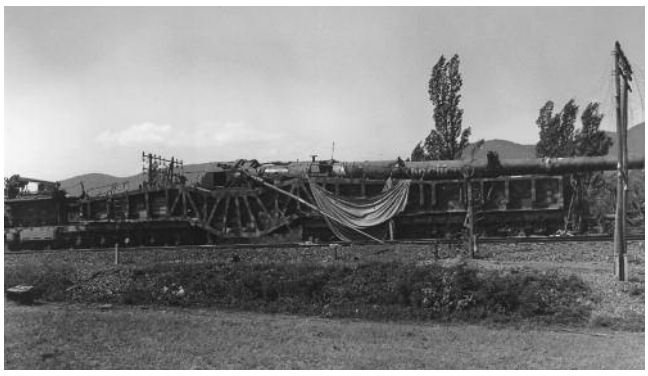
The operation started on the morning of August 25 but difficulties in communications and problems with deployment ruined the exceedingly demanding operation. Kampfgruppe Thieme retook Grane as planned but Kampfgruppe Wilde was late in reaching La Coucourde which was its objective and the sector was virtually unprotected when elements of the 141st Infantry moved out of the Condillac pass with the support of armour. By 7 p.m., two rifle companies, four tanks and seven tank destroyers were down in the valley, blocking the N7 highway. By midnight, von Wietersheim led a sharp charge against the road-block and within an hour, the Americans had been driven back into the Condillac pass. Three of the tanks and six of the TDs had been destroyed, yet Dahlquist had still committed little of his strength in the vital sector north of Montélimar.

On the 26th, the Germans renewed their efforts to clear the sector north-east of Montélimar, though less ambitiously than the previous day. In the south, their attack broke through a mile north of the Roubion river but two American battalions, one each from the 142nd and 143rd Infantry, were pulled out of reserve and committed in a counter-attack and the situation was quickly restored. In the north, another Kampfgruppe came to within three kilometres of Crest but was too weak to press home the attack. Meanwhile, Task Force Butler had launched another attempt to cut the N7, two rifle companies attacking down the northern slope of Hill 300 while a platoon of tanks moved out of the Condillac pass to support them. The Germans reacted swiftly and the attack was halted, Dahlquist having failed again to commit enough of his force where it really counted.

As for the Germans, the withdrawal was evolving successfully. Though American artillery intermittently shelled the road and railway lines along the Rhône, a steady stream of traffic continued throughout the day. East of the Rhône, the crossing of the Drôme proved to be a serious bottleneck since the Livron bridge had been badly damaged during the night of August 16/17 when an enterprising team from the FFI had blown a 20-metre section of the bridge. To the west, the bulk of the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps had pulled abreast of Montélimar and continued retreating north. Controlling these movements was not easy and those elements of Flieger-Regiment 71 in the lead outdistanced the main body of the corps. They soon lost most of their vehicles to air attacks and FFI ambushes, many of the men joining up with the 11. Panzer-Division east of the river.



In 1943, the Germans had transfered to southern France Eisenbahn-Artillerie-Abteilung 640 with two batteries of railway guns: E-Art.Bttr. 692 with three 274mm and E-Art.Bttr. 698 with two 380mm guns. A third battery joined them early in 1944, E-Art.Bttr. 749 with two 280mm guns. From mid-August, Eisenbahn-Artillerie-Abteilung 640 pulled back northwards and, although one or two guns may have got through, most were blocked by wrecked trains just north of Montélimar. *Above and below:* **Stuck in between burnt-out carriages, these two 27,4cm Kanone (E) 592(f) of E-Art.Bttr. 692 appear to be undamaged. Though it has not been possible to precisely trace its provenance, it seems that the 28cm K5 that is now displayed at Calais (see *After the Battle* No. 78) came from E-Art.Bttr. 749. (US Army)**

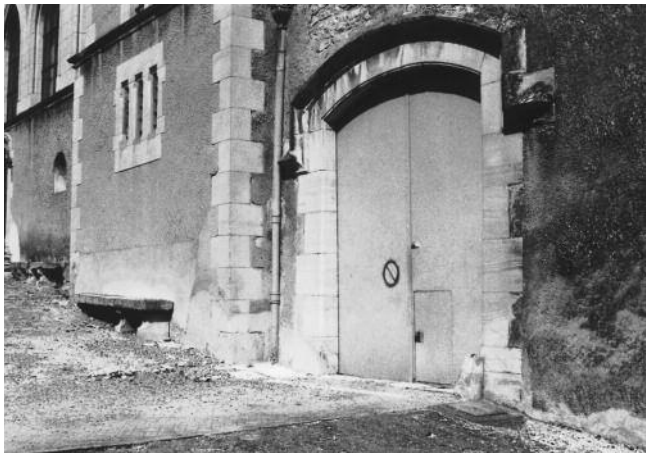


Left: **Another of the heavies from Eisenbahn-Artillerie-Abteilung 640, a 38cm Siegfried Kanone from E-Art.Bttr. 698 abandoned at La Coucourde. (US Army)** *Right:* **Now on the same track, TGV high-speed trains race to the Mediterranean. On the far bank of the Rhône that flows behind the tree line, the mountain skyline permits a reasonably accurate comparison.**

Hot pursuit! South of Montélimar, an M8 howitzer motor carriage (the M8 mounted a 75mm howitzer on an M5 light tank chassis) rolls up the N7 past the remains of a shattered German convoy. (US Army)

Left: **The Montélimar battle is over. The 143rd Infantry, 36th Division, enters Puy-Saint-Martin, 15 kilometres south of Crest. (US Army)** *Right:* **Fifty years later Puy-Saint-Martin has changed little.**

North of Montélimar, an M10 tank destroyer (the M10 was a 76mm anti-tank gun on an M4A2 or M4A3 chassis) crosses a village littered with dead horses and the wreckage of destroyed guns and abandoned vehicles. (US Army)



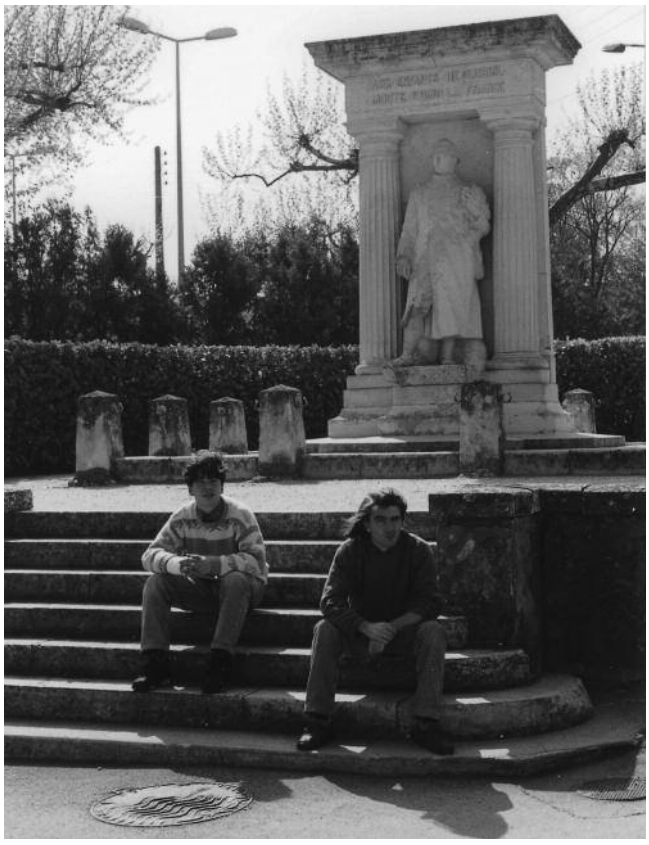
Left: **Two US Signal Corps photographers, Sergeant Irwing Leibowitz (left) and Sergeant Joseph P. Dieves (extreme right) and their driver, Private Raymond Rocha (second from left), captured these Germans in the woods north of Marsanne. (US Army)** *Right:* **We found that the picture was taken on Place Emile Loubet in Marsanne, not far from the town hall.**

On the morning of the 26th, Truscott arrived at Dahlquist's headquarters, intending to relieve him of command. He started remonstrating with him for having failed to carry out his objective — to stop the German withdrawal — and complained that Dahlquist's situation reports had repeatedly proved to be wrong. In his defence, Dahlquist pointed out the shortages of fuel, ammunition and transportation and the renewed German attempts to break through his front. His resolve weakened, Truscott decided not to relieve Dahlquist for the moment, urging him instead to push Task Force Butler to the N7 at once and block it. Much to Truscott's disappointment, the renewed attack by a reinforced Task Force Butler on the 27th down the Condillac pass failed, and an attempt to drive northwards to Loriol on the 28th was equally unsuccessful.

Throughout the 27th and 28th, the Germans withdrew their troops northwards but their losses were mounting and the main road was now littered with dead horses and destroyed vehicles, while the railway line was blocked by wrecked trains, including heavy pieces of railway artillery. South of Montélimar, the 3rd Division overran a column of some 300 vehicles of the rearguard, taking 500 prisoners. During the night of August 28/29, Grenadier-Regiment 326 succeeded in breaking through the La Coucourde gauntlet and withdrawing directly up the N7 but two other regiments of the 198. Infanterie-Division met the 143rd Infantry in the valley north of Sauzet, between Hills 300 and 430. They were broken up in the series of firefights and, though many of the grenadiers succeeded in reaching the N7, most were captured.

During the final battles on August 28-29, over 1,200 Germans were captured, including Generalmajor Otto Richter, the commander of the 198. Infanterie-Division. Clearing Montélimar, the 15th Infantry captured another 450 prisoners and 2,500 more were taken north-east of Montélimar when the sector was finally swept on the 30th.

The battle of southern France was over. In spite of heavy losses in personnel — some 20 per cent casualties to the units moving up the east bank of the Rhône (much less for the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps west of the river) — and more losses in equipment, artillery and vehicles, the 19. Armee had managed to extract much of its forces from what might have been a deadly trap. Exhausted and disorganised, the army pulled back northwards, while the 11. Panzer-Division covered its flank against attacks from the east.



Left: **Between August 21-31, the Americans captured some 5,800 prisoners in the Rhône valley alone. Three of them, members of the Luftwaffe, were pictured in front of the First World War memorial at Loriol with a GI of the 36th Division. (US Army)** *Right:* **In front of the same memorial, Johan and Michaël, the author's sons, play their rôle with all seriousness.**

Above: **Meanwhile, the 19. Armee pushed its exhausted and disorganised forces northwards. In Lyon, an unknown French photographer took, discreetly, these pictures of the last German troops in town.** *Below:* **In the Rue de la République, he snatched a shot of a 37mm AA gun (SdKfz 161/3 in German parlance) of the 11. Panzer-Division.**

PURSUIT TO THE NORTH

With the Germans in full retreat, and the vital ports of Toulon and Marseille secured, the next objective of the Seventh Army was to drive north to join with Eisenhower's forces advancing from Normandy. While the French completed the clearing of the harbours, from August 25 Patch began to send increasing supplies to the VI Corps to support the advance and on the 28th he issued new directives. The corps was to start out for Dijon as soon as possible with Lyon, the third largest city in France and an important road and rail centre, its immediate objective. West of the Rhône, the French were to push northwards in support. Truscott, who had directed the 45th Division to initiate reconnaissance northwards from Grenoble two days previously, speeded up the move. He ordered the 36th Division to advance along the east bank of the Rhône to Lyon and the 45th Division to move to Bourg-en-Bresse, 60 kilometres north-east of the city. The 3rd Division was to follow the 45th Division, ready to support either division if necessary.

Concerned with the possibility of an Allied attempt at a wide envelopment north of Lyon, the Germans continued to retreat northwards. Wiese assigned the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps the mission of holding Lyon, where the FFI had started a major uprising, and controlling the traffic through it. He planned to pull his rearguards out of the city on the night of September 2/3, after all bridges across the Rhône and Saône rivers had been blown. Warned about the Americans outflanking his withdrawing forces from the east, he ordered the 11. Panzer-Division to secure the Rhône and Ain river bridges east of Lyon before the enemy reached the area, but it was too late. On August 29, having encountered only weak opposition, the 45th Division had captured two bridges over the Rhône and during the next few days, advanced further north to Meximieux, about 30 kilometres north-east of Lyon, and to Pont-d'Ain on the Ain river. Having failed to secure the crossings before the Americans reached them, Wiese now ordered the 11. Panzer-Division to try to disrupt the American advance. Isolated engagements ensued on September 1, the most serious being at Meximieux where a small infantry/tank Kampfgruppe cut through the rear of the two leading regiments of the 45th Division. However, as American units returned to the town from the north, the Germans started pulling back. Fighting to clear the Meximieux area continued throughout the night, losses being over 100 German and some 200 American, most of them being taken prisoner.

On September 1, with Patch's consent, Truscott decided to leave the honour of formally entering Lyon to French troops and directed the 36th Division to bypass the city to the east. Also, he pressed Dahlquist to launch a major attack towards Bourg-en-Bresse the following day.

Left: **The Germans finally evacuated Lyon during the night of September 2/3, after all bridges across the Rhône and Saône rivers had been blown. This Panther tank of the 11. Panzer-Division was pictured at the eastern end of the La Guillotière bridge.** *Right:* **A new roundabout has now replaced the tree-lined square.**

Left: **The trek northwards continues. We are now at Villefranche-sur-Saône, 30 kilometres north of Lyon, where a convoy shelters in the shade on the Rue Nationale. (Bundesarchiv)** *Right:* **This was then the main street running through the city.**

On September 2, when the 45th Division's two leading regiments tried to reach Bourg-en-Bresse as ordered, they found that the Germans now presented a fairly strong coherent front. Hoping to find weak points in the German defences, Truscott ordered the 117th Cavalry Squadron to send out recce patrols. Elements of the cavalry were able to slip through and two troops reached Montrevel, a village on the N75, the main road north-west from Bourg, only to find themselves trapped there by elements of the

On September 3, French forces entered Lyon and found that the city had been abandoned by the Germans. The situation was hopeless but the Miliciens (see *After the Battle* No. 105) decided to fight on to the end. Soldiers take cover behind the parapet while shots are fired at snipers hidden in the Hôtel Dieu hospital. In right background, the Wilson Bridge. (US Army)

Left: **A US Signal Corps photographer took this picture of 'a Milicien who had taken up arms against the FFI and Allies' being led away by FFI. (US Army)** *Right:* **JP discovered that the picture had been taken on Place Gabriel Péri.**

Above: **When the 45th Division reached the Rhône on August 29, General der Infanterie Wiese ordered the 11. Panzer-Division to disrupt their advance. On September 1, at Meximieux, 30 kilometres north-east of Lyon, a small Kampfgruppe cut through the rear of the leading American regiments and at dusk units of the 179th and 157th Infantry were sent back to Meximieux from the north. With their line of retreat threatened, the Germans finally broke off the action but the Americans were unable to recover the area until the early hours of September 2. Matériel losses to the 179th Infantry and supporting units during the Meximieux affair amounted to seven vehicles destroyed, including two tank destroyers and two armoured cars. The Germans had lost a dozen tanks in and around the town, one of them being this Panther lying on Place Vaugelas but as so often happened the original caption promoted it to the rank of a 'Tiger'! (US Army)** *Right:* **The Lion d'Or Hôtel is still in business today under the same name.**

Left: **On September 3, elements of the 117th Cavalry Squadron (Troop B plus one platoon of Troop A) were trapped in Montrevel by elements of the 11. Panzer-Division. They had to surrender that evening and lost all their vehicles, about 40 armoured cars and Jeeps, together with over 150 men, mostly POWs. This M5 light tank was disabled on the D975, at the northern entrance of the village.** *Right:* **Fifty-five years later Montrevel remains almost timeless.**

Left: **On the 22nd, General Dahlquist was worried by his right flank so while he reorganised his scattered 36th Division, he sent the 143rd Infantry to Grenoble. In the afternoon, the French populace greet these men who were, according to the original caption, 'the first American troops to reach the town'. (US Army)** *Right:* **The picture was taken on the Rue Montorge.**

11. Panzer-Division. A counter-attack to relieve them was made on the afternoon of September 3 but to no avail and the surrounded cavalrymen had to surrender that evening. Troop B and one platoon of Troop A had lost all their vehicles — about 40 armoured cars and Jeeps — together with over 150 men, mostly captured. Lieutenant Daniel W. Lee, commanding Headquarters Platoon, Troop A, was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry in action at Montrevel in spite of severe wounds. Though Truscott later charged the 117th Cavalry with carelessness, as official US Army historians Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith point out in *Riviera to the Rhine*, 'it is hard to escape the conclusion that Truscott simply assigned missions to the 117th Cavalry that were beyond its capabilities'.

The Germans evacuated Lyon during the night of September 2/3 and the following afternoon, the main body of the 19. Armee was north of Macon. That day, September 3, French forces entered Lyon and found the city totally evacuated. Bypassing the city to the west, CC2 of the 1ère Division Blindée pushed northwards and succeeded in trapping the rearguard of the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps some 30 kilometres north of Lyon, taking nearly 2,000 prisoners as a result. On the morning of the 4th, VI Corps found that the bulk of the German forces facing them had once again escaped. Encountering no opposition, the 45th Division entered Bourg-en-Bresse, while the leading units of the 36th Division moved into Macon. On the right wing, the 3ème DIA was moving abreast of the VI Corps, probing the Jura mountains along the Swiss border.

The Germans had blown the Vercors Bridge over the Drac river. (US Army) After the war, this bridge on Cours Berriat was rebuilt exactly as the original.

Left: **On August 25 at Pont-de-Claix, five kilometres south of Grenoble, German prisoners were photographed as they marched southwards. The picture was taken from a window on the upper floor of the town hall but trees now completely hide the view. (US Army)** *Right:* **Not to be outdone, Franck Laforge of the town hall staff managed to call in a lorry with a hydraulic lift and position it right in front of the town hall to take this perfect comparison for us!**

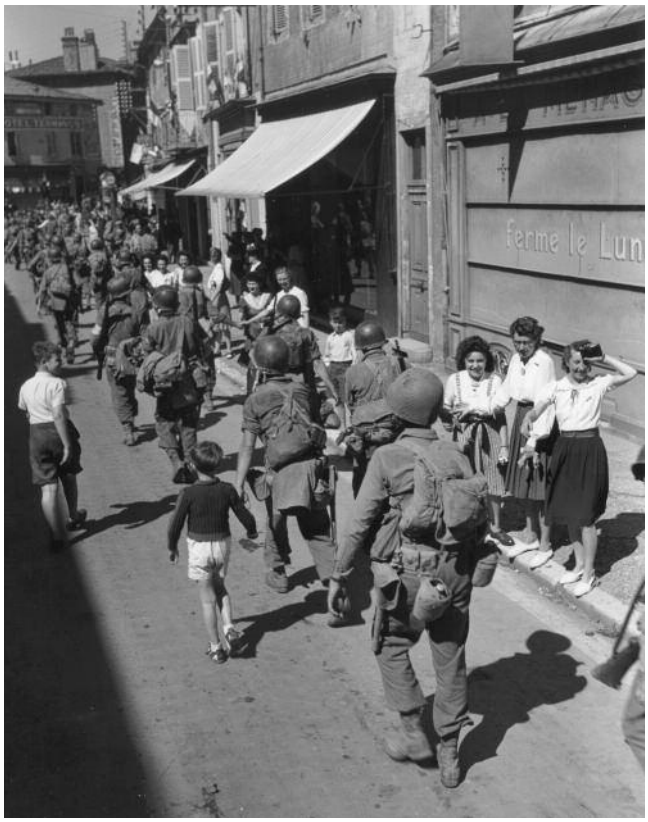
Left: **Advancing from the south-east, the 45th Division entered Bourg-en-Bresse on the morning of September 4. By 10 a.m., sniper fire was reported cleared and troops made their way into the city proper. Here, an M10 tank destroyer of the 645th TD Battalion rolls into the town via the N75. (US Army)** *Right:* **Boulevard du Brou, over half a century later.**

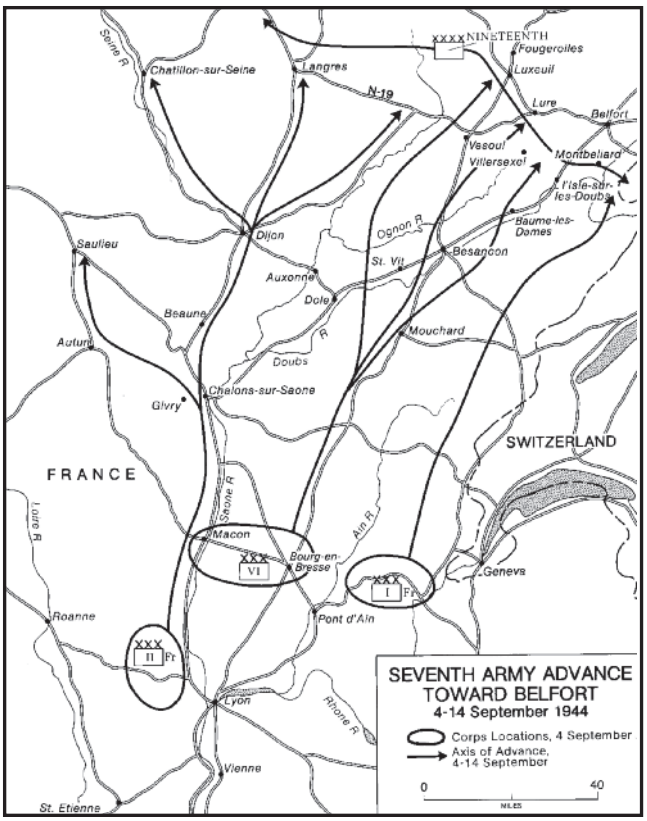
THE DIJON SALIENT

Patch's original plans had called for the VI Corps to drive north on the left wing to join with the Third Army advancing from the west while, on the right, the French forces were to head north-east for the Belfort gap, the Alsace and the Rhine. On September 2, in view of the current deployment of forces, Truscott suggested a change in plan as the French were in a better position to pursue the retreating Germans northwards leaving his own forces to advance to the Belfort gap. Patch agreed on the morning of the 3rd but de Lattre at first did not as he felt that, with his forces split on both sides of VI Corps, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to unify them as an independent French army sometime in the near future. In the end he compromised and accepted Truscott's proposal but announced the formation of two French corps headquarters: the IIème Corps d'Armée to control the forces pushing north along the Rhône and Saône rivers and the Ier Corps d'Armée to operate on the right of the VI Corps. Not wishing to make an issue, Patch agreed and issued the appropriate orders on the 4th.

By September 5, after a further withdrawal, Armeegruppe G was extended along a wide front centered on Dijon. Held by the ragged elements of the LXXXV. Armeekorps and IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps backed by the 11. Panzer-Division, the eastern end of this salient rested on the Swiss border near Pontarlier. From Chalon to Langres, the western sector of the front was rather a bridgehead west of Dijon, held open while the forces retreating from the Atlantic coast under LXIV. Armeekorps moved through it. Blaskowitz's main concern was with his right flank, thinly-held by LXVI. Armeekorps with an assortment of forces, mostly security and service units of all types just scraped together. Elements of the 16. Infanterie-Division arriving from the Atlantic were quickly rushed to LXVI. Armeekorps and ordered to deploy north and north-west of Langres, 60 kilometres north of Dijon. On the right flank, the tactical link with the 1. Armee, which had been totally lost since August 26, was weakly re-established on the 4th.

Between September 4 and 8, Seventh Army's advance northwards continued, encountering only disorganised resistance. On the left, the IIème Corps d'Armée cleared Chalon on the 5th, but stopped on the 6th to wait for fuel to resume its drive. They reached the Beaune area on the 7th where they came across groups from the





Further down Boulevard du Brou, the people of Bourg-en-Bresse stood and cheered as troops of the 45th Division marched through their town on September 4. The 141st Infantry regimental historian later recalled what he dubbed the 'Champagne Campaign': 'For three days our columns rumbled north, giving birth to impressions that will always remain with us: mountains and fertile green valleys; little villages with huge cathedrals; the bells in every little village announcing the liberation as the first doughboy-laden tank grinds through the cheering crowds; steel helmets filled with eggs; cakes of rich butter rolled in clean wet leaves; a peasant woman with her apron filled with not quite ripened apples . . .'

Above left and right: **From the window of his house in Genlis, 15 kilometres east of Dijon, a local civilian surreptiously took pictures of the German withdrawal, these shots showing a long column of horse-drawn carts, followed by some camouflaged vehicles.** *Below left:* **Some hours later, from the same window, he photographed the sudden arrival of the tanks of the 1ère Division Blindée. (ECPArmées)** *Below right:* **This particular house has been demolished since but JP took this near-comparison from the first floor of the Hôtel du Commerce which still stands at the end of what is now the Avenue du Général de Gaulle.**

Another picture of the 'Champagne Campaign' as an M5 of the 1ère Division Blindée crosses Place Darcy in Dijon on September 11. As the 141st Infantry regimental history summed up: 'Rich red wine from the Rhône; a little girl with a French flag throwing a clumsily made corsage tied together with a bit of red, white and blue ribbon that stings your face as you roll on northward; a group of mountaineers with FFI brassards on their arms and nondescript fire-arms resting easily in the crooks of their arms, standing beside a bridge that is standing untouched waiting for American tanks to rumble across it and onward towards Germany. . . Vive La France! Vive L'Amérique! This was the way to fight a war!' (US Army)

Left: **The leading elements of the US 3rd Division approached Besançon on September 5 and quickly crossed the Doubs river to surround the area before the German defenders could react. Yet two days' fighting followed before the city fell late on the 8th, half the defending troops having been killed or captured. (US Army)** *Right:* **On a street where there was once a gaping hole crossed by a Bailey bridge . . . this is the rather disappointing comparison of the Battant bridge in Besançon.**

'A long convoy of tanks move up to the front'. This picture was taken on the D942, just a kilometre from Ornans which lies 25 kilometres south of Besançon. The armour is moving northwards in the direction of Baume-les-Dames. (US Army)

LXIV. Armeekorps trying to reach Dijon. On September 7 and 8, the French rounded up around 1,000 men of the 16. Infanterie-Division and 159. Reserve-Division and six railway trains, one of them armoured, packed with troops, guns and supplies. On the army's right wing, the VI Corps also pressed northwards on September 4, heading for Besançon, with the 3rd Division in the lead, the 36th Division on the left and the 45th Division in the rear. On the corps right flank, the 3ème DIA was moving abreast. After two days of desultory fighting, Besançon fell to the 3rd Division late on the 8th.

That same day, with all the units withdrawing from the Atlantic coast having joined up, Blaskowitz ordered another major withdrawal. On its left wing, the 19. Armee pulled back from the Doubs river and established a new defensive line centred around Vesoul. In the centre, the LXIV. Armeekorps fell back swiftly, abandoning Dijon, while on the right the LXVI. Armeekorps withdrew to the axis of Langres—Chaumont which swung north-eastwards to join with 1. Armee near Bayon, just south of Nancy. Also on the 8th, Ob. West transferred control of the 1. Armee, formerly on Heeresgruppe B's southern wing, to Armeegruppe G.

Dijon fell without a fight to the French on September 11. They pushed north-west beyond the city and at about 7 a.m. on September 12 met with the 2ème Division Blindée of the Third Army near Châtillon-sur-Seine. 'Dragoon' had met 'Overlord'!

For both sides, one major campaign had ended and a new one was about to begin. Though Armeegruppe G had succeeded to extricate most of its forces from western and southern France, the losses had been staggering. Between September 3 and 14, Seventh Army had captured over 12,000 prisoners, about half taken by the Americans and half by the French, which brought the total number of prisoners since August 15 to over 45,000. To this figure must be added the 31,000 men taken by the French at Toulon and Marseilles, the 24,000 or so hopelessly isolated in the fortresses on the Atlantic coast and the 20,000 men of Gruppe Elster, now cut off south of the Loire (see *After the Battle* No. 48). All in all, the grand total came to around 40 per cent of the original strength of Armeegruppe G on August 15.

On September 15, the forces from the Mediterranean passed to SHAEF control and were placed under the 6th Army Group of Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers which became operational that day.

Above left: **'Dragoon' meets 'Overlord'! On September 15, this picture made the headline in the *Stars and Stripes:* 'Here is the first picture of the meeting of American troops of the Third US Army with French troops of the Seventh Army'. Dragon Jean Quignon shakes hands with Corporal Carl Newman. On the left stands *Champs Elysées*, an M8 of the 2ème Dragons, Seventh Army, crewed by Adjudant Emile Lancery, Dragon Emile Lalanne and Dragon Quignon, while on the right stands *Butch*, an M8 of the 86th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Third Army, with Sergeant Louis Basil, Corporal Edgar Ellis and Corporal Newman. (US Army)** *Above right:* **The historic meeting took place in front of the town hall in Autun.**

Right: **In a second picture, Adjudant Lancery shakes hands with Sergeant Basil while Lieutenant Vernon Hill looks on. Actually, these pictures were taken on September 13, three days after the real first meetings between the 'Dragoon' and 'Overlord' forces. As with other link-ups, the time and place of the first contact between Seventh Army and Third Army is still a subject of controversy. Individuals in single Jeeps may well have established early contact with patrols of the other army and recce elements of both forces had already met near Sombernon in the late evening of the 10th. Also, at least one courier plane of the 2ème Division Blindée landed near the same town the following afternoon. The Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean gave September 11 as the date of the first meeting while the French accepted September 12. As to the link-up at Autun which had made the headline in the *Stars and Stripes*, Jean Paul managed to trace four of the men involved — two Americans and two Frenchmen — and one of them, Jean Quignon, explained precisely what happened. Flanking the advance of the IIème Corps d'Armée, the 2ème Dragons had reached the town on the night of September 8/9. Skirmishes took place throughout the 9th but the French pushed northwards and on the 10th reached Saulieu and Sombernon, west of Dijon. As the situation at Autun was still unclear, a squadron of the 2ème Dragons was sent back to secure the town. On the 11th, the situation progressively improved and late in the afternoon, a patrol from the 2ème Dragons met a unit from the 6th Armored Division, US Third Army, at Saulieu. The next day, elements of the Third Army arrived at Autun. The 2ème Dragons' squadron was still in the town on September 13 when orders arrived from higher up: the Americans wanted to take pictures of the link-up between Seventh Army and Third Army and an armoured car had to be sent 'to make the junction in front of the town hall'. *Champs Elysées* was ordered to the town hall where an American M8 was waiting and the 'meeting' pictures were taken. On September 15, *Stars and Stripes* put the picture on its front page and gave the names of the men involved as well as their home towns. (US Army)**

Left: **This is the view from the German foxholes on the slope of the Bouis hill, looking south-eastwards. The American attackers (3rd Platoon, Company B, 15th Infantry) advanced from the left background. Behind the vineyard, in middle distance running across the picture is the cane-lined ditch along which Staff Sergeant Audie Murphy made his way to the German foxholes.** *Right:* **Firing a captured MG42, Audie Murphy re-enacted his attack at Ramatuelle for his biopic *To Hell and Back*.**

AUDIE MURPHY'S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

By David 'Spec' McClure

I was the ghost writer who helped Audie Murphy with his war story *To Hell and Back*. When we got to the DSC action in the south of France, I put the details together much as they appear in the book (see *After the Battle* No. 3). This was a combination of the citation details and fresh information from Audie. At the time of writing he was deeply depressed and exhausted. I had expected him to go over every detail and correct what was wrong but he failed to correct many mistakes. He mainly wanted to get that book finished and out of his hair.

We were under deadline with the publishers so I just kept writing with the hope that Audie would take over and make all corrections. But he did not. As a consequence, *To Hell and Back*, published in 1949 is filled with errors and products of the imagination, mostly mine. The movie version of the book strayed even further from the facts. Audie disliked talking about himself and was apt to say any damned thing during an interview just to get it over with.

During the action on August 15, Company B suffered remarkably few casualties: according to the records, five men were killed and two were wounded. One of those killed was Lattie Tipton who was called Brandon in both the book and film versions of *To Hell and Back*. To avoid possible lawsuits, we changed the real-life names of all the characters in the book with the exception of Audie. He named the Tipton character after Everett Brandon, a close friend who was a Texas Highway Patrolman.

Audie said that in doing the movie version of *To Hell and Back*, the death of Tipton had been filmed much like it really had happened. But when the rushes for this sequence were shown on the CinemaScope screen, it looked so brutal that the studio people were afraid that audiences would be repelled by it. Consequently, the sequence was toned down considerably and re-shot.

In early 1971, I made a final attempt to get Audie to straighten out the details on the actions for which he won his medals. This I did by writing down all the 'facts' that I had and I thought that Audie, seeing how wrong I was, might apply himself and finally correct all of the errors.

Above: **What Audie Murphy saw when his platoon came under fire from the German foxholes about 200 metres away on the slope of the hill. The following is based on a report given in December 1944 by Sergeant Norman O. Hollen (1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, Company B) to accompany the recommendation for award of the Distinguished Service Cross to Audie Murphy. Crouching low, Murphy made his way up the ditch (left) with a machine gun until he was on the flank of the German foxhole (on the hillside in the centre). Laying the machine gun over the edge of the ditch, he fired a surprise burst at the Germans, killing two of them and silencing the position. He went back to return the machine gun and started again up the ditch in company with his buddy, Pfc Lattie Tipton. Two Germans then came out of the Bouis farm (right background) carrying a white flag and Tipton stood up to wave them to come whereupon a sniper shot him dead. Firing his carbine quickly, Murphy killed the two Germans. He then moved forward uphill and turned behind the German positions. In close combat, he wounded two Germans, killed two more and captured five. He sent the prisoners down the hill and started to return to his position in the platoon line when Germans suddenly ran out of the farm, trying to escape. Murphy fired at them, killing two, and six others surrendered. It should be noted that the eyewitness accounts do not mention Murphy's use of a captured German machine gun. There are so many differences between the eyewitness accounts that support the DSC citation and *To Hell and Back* that it is hard to escape the conclusion that Murphy's account is filled with products of the imagination, for example, the story of him and two men attacking alone a 'huge German coastal gun'. The largest artillery on the Saint-Tropez peninsula belonged to Heeres-Artillerie-Abteilung 1193 which had three batteries of four sFH 415(f) 155mm guns. The AFHQ intelligence map (see centre pages) puts one of these batteries in front of Ramatuelle and two south of Gassin — but all three appear to have surrendered without a fight later in the day. Having checked the sketch plan (see back cover) drawn for Murphy's DSC recommendation against a detailed map of the Ramatuelle area, Jean Paul finally succeeded to pinpoint the site of the earlier action as being on the slope of the Bouis hill. A visit there added another piece to the puzzle when he met Michel Courtain, a local who had played on the hill as a child and remembered the German position there.**

On July 11, 1948, Murphy returned to Ramatuelle where the mayor, Mr Henri Battini, welcomed him on Yellow Beach. Murphy then went to the Bouis hill and there he found the grave he was looking for.

'The earth was mounded like a grave and at one end was a cross. A weathered German helmet hung from one arm of the cross. Audie studied the grave for a few moments and then said softly: "It was either them or us".'

Audie brought this manuscript back to me around the middle of May 1971. He sat down at our kitchen table and talked for two hours but not about the details of the manuscript. He was again deeply depressed and very tired. After that talk, I never saw him or heard from him again and two weeks later he was dead. The manuscript was unmarked.

After his death in the plane crash in May 1971, I was joined in my research by Carl Swickerath. Carl had been in a rifle company with the 3rd Infantry Division until he was wounded at Anzio.

Swickerath and I were after two things: basic army documents and as many of the eyewitness accounts that we could get hold of. Of course, time and distance had altered the memories of the old men who served with Audie in Company B. We checked their accounts against such basic records as the daily Battle Reports and the Morning Reports. Among these were the 'eyewitness accounts' of the actions for which Audie got his medals. When an American soldier is recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, the recommendation must be accompanied by two eyewitness reports called 'Complete Description of Service Rendered'. In Audie's case the two eyewitnesses were enlisted men. I was able — or so I thought — to put my finger on the cause of the radical differences between the DSC citation and Audie's personal account: the eyewitness accounts were not taken down until December 1944, four months after the action. In that time, Company B had been in so many fire-fights that one could easily confuse one action with another.

I think that Audie's account of the action is probably the most accurate. During our long friendship, I learned how Audie thought and the bits of information about the DSC action that he gave to me over the years finally formed a mosaic. The eyewitness accounts, for instance, say that Audie killed two Germans bearing a white flag because he thought they were the ones who had tricked Lattie Tipton into exposing himself.

Audie was a rugged fighter. In his rage and grief, he was capable of killing the two Germans with the white flag but I simply don't think that he did it, otherwise he would have told me about it. That white flag bit in the book came from the army newspaper clipping. Audie never knew who killed Tipton. He told me — years after the book was published — that Tipton had been killed by a single bullet from a sniper.

The last time we talked about the DSC action, not long before his death, Audie said: 'In retrospect we can afford to be benevolent. Maybe those Germans on our left did shout that they wanted to surrender and Lattie heard them. There was so much noise and confusion that I couldn't tell.'

Following the fall of the position, Audie took two men on a patrol. They found a huge German coastal gun still in operation. Although badly outnumbered, Murphy decided to attack. Through bluff, ingenuity and great risk, the three Americans captured the gun and all of its crew. Years later, he said: 'Looking back, my decision to attack seems damned foolish. A single muzzle blast from that big gun could have killed us all.'

After turning in the gun crew as prisoners, Audie led the first American patrol into Ramatuelle. This apparently took place around 3.45 p.m. on the afternoon of August 15. Murphy entered the town ready to fight, but the Germans had already left.

So just who were these Germans willing to fight for the Bouis hill? The AFHQ intelligence map indicated merely a flak battery with two light gun-positions, both rated 'unoccupied', and four heavy ones, two of them 'unoccupied'; in addition, a single row of barbed wire surrounding the battery and two machine guns. *Above:* **On the slope of the hill, Michel Courtain shows us the place where the German flak position had been. In the background one can see Pampelonne beach — Alpha Yellow. M. Courtain clearly remembers trenches and foxholes on this spot, and German graves. When we wrote to the German Kriegsgräberfürsorge (war graves commission), their records stated there had in fact been three graves on the hill (plus three more elsewhere in the municipality of Ramatuelle). Those on the hill had contained the remains of Stefan Marczalkiewicz (rank not given), Gefreiter Friedrich Wowrosch and one unknown who must be soldiers killed by Murphy (but note that the recommendation describes him as having killed eight). All six German graves at Ramatuelle were opened in 1959 and the dead reburied in the German war cemetery at Dagneux, near Lyon. Lattie Tipton was interred in the American war cemetery at Draguignan. Though the German soldiers near the Bouis farm had held their ground, the majority of the troops that defended the Saint-Tropez peninsula — Azerbaijani elements of the IV. Bataillon of Grenadier-Regiment 765 — surrendered without a fight.**

PFC MURPHY KILLED 2,
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PFC MURPHY KILLED
2 GERMANS COMING
OUT OF THE HOUSE
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MURPHY - CO. B - FIFTEENTH IN